SCENES

IN

FEUDAL TIMES.

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FEUDAL TIMES

A Romance

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By R. H. WILMOT.

Inopem solatur et ægrum.

HOR.

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CHAPTER XI.

Beware of him.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE room into which Jacqueline was ushered contained nothing striking in it's appearance or furniture. It's high small windows fronted the east, and through them the sun, just emerging from the sea, was visible. Jacqueline beheld it with emotions similar to those which are inspired by the sight of an

old friend in a distant country. Tears filled her eyes, as she reflected how different was her situation when on the preceding evening she saw it set.

Having for a short time indulged the sorrow which this comparison excited, she observed a door on the opposite side of the apartment. It was unfastened, and communicated with a gallery terminated at the other extremity by a similar entrance. While she hesitated whether to advance, steps ap[illegible] the corridor.

A female attendant entered, and in a respectful manner requested Jacqueline to follow her to the apartment prepared for her.

Having passed the gallery, they proceeded to the main body of the building. Notwithstanding the uneasiness

of Jacqueline, she could not avoid observing the magnificence and elegance displayed in the architecture. The chamber to which she was conducted bore the same character of antient splendor that marked the rest of this venerable edifice.

"What is the name of this castle, and to whom does it belong?" Jacqueline inquired.

"It is Etonbury castle, the seat of the Marquis Omfredo," replied the woman.

"Gracious heaven! is it possible that a brother can act thus? Where is the marquis?" continued Jaqueline, after a pause. "I must see him immediately."

"His lordship is retired," rejoined the

attendant; "and he gave strict orders not to be disturbed."

"Did the marquis know that I was expected?" Of this the woman was unable to inform her; but observing the paleness and fatigue impressed on Jacqueline's countenance, she urged her to take repose, and offered her services. These Jacqueline declined, and inquired whether Count Cajetan was at the castle. Being answered in the affirmative, she desired to be informed as soon as the marquis rose, and dismissed the attendant.

This castle which she had so recently assigned to the marquis, had been the principal residence of her maternal ancestors. Though too young to remember her grandfather who had bequeathed it to her, yet the affectionate

veneration which the baroness always testified to his memory had inspired Jacqueline with a respectful tenderness for this regretted relative.

Etonbury castle was further endeared to her imagination by being the birthplace of her mother, the scene in which her childhood and youth had been passed.

The thick branches of an old oak that grew in the court before her windows waved slowly in the wind, while the sun shining on it's quivering leaves reflected their ever-changing forms on the floor. "Fluctuating and uncertain as these shadows is the life of mortals," exclaimed Jacqueline, as she gazed on their ceaseless motion. "Of how many generations has this venerable tree witnessed the rise and fall! Beneath it's shade flourished in

evanescent greatness the proud lords of these domains."

Engaged in this and similar musings, a considerable time elapsed; when concluding from the continued stillness that there was little probability of immediately seeing the marquis, Jacqueline, overcome by fatigue, threw herself on the couch.

At first her slumbers were short and and broken, and she often started at the strange and distressing scenes in which she beheld Sir Almeric, but these harassing fancies were at length succeeded by a tranquil sleep.

The day was far advanced before she awoke. The steps and other sounds in the castle announced that it's inhabitants were risen. Jacqueline had approached a window, when she heard

the lock of her door moved; and looking round, she beheld the marquis enter.

He appeared confused; and after expressing in a hurried manner the pleasure her presence would confer on them, he continued, "Perhaps the method we have taken to procure this happiness requires some apology."

"Was it you, my lord," said Jacqueline, "who planned this outrage?"

"To the marchioness," he replied, "we are indebted for the project, with which she has but just acquainted me. Come, let me conduct you to her. Both she and the count impatiently await you." At the same time he moved towards the entrance, expecting Jacqueline to follow him.

"Stop, my lord. Do you indeed countenance these proceedings?"

"Most assuredly. I admire the spirit and dexterity with which the adventure has been achieved.

"If you are insensible to the indignity offered to yourself by this insult to your sister, I trust you will not prove equally callous to the distress which this incident will occasion to the baron,

"Distress must ever be the portion of the guilty. His fate is advancing, and you ought to bless the inventive genius of the marchioness, which has snatched you from him. Accept the count's offer. His protection will secure you from the disgrace in which a father's crimes will otherwise involve you."

"Never," said Jacqueline with firmness, "will I purchase safety by the sacrifice of duty. The misfortunes, the sad mystery, that surround my father increase his claim on our affection."

"I am sorry," said the marquis, "to perceive your mind so shackled by prejudices. He who brings dishonor on his family forfeits all title to their respect. Ignorant as you are of the baron's conduct, your solicitude is amiable. But I know him. Yes, my sister, it is with regret I declare he is unworthy your regard. Suffer not anxiety respecting him to disturb the happiness that awaits you with Count Cajetan.

This speech shocked Jacqueline; for while it displayed the unfeeling disposition of her brother, it revived with keener anguish the self-accusations

of the baron. But instead of producing the effect which the marquis expected, it increased her aversion to him, and confirmed her previous intention of immediately returning.

After declaring this determination, which the marquis heard in silence, she inquired the reason of her having been carried to the ruined castle, and related the strange scene which she had there witnessed. The marquis looked at her with astonishment and incredulity, as with a smile he said, "How much has the adventure of last night improved your fancy! I only wish you had chosen a better hero for so marvellous tale."

This ill-timed irony heightened the disgust of Jacqueline, but stifling her resentment she mildly repeated her desire of an explanation. The marquis

persisted in affirming that these extraordinary circumstances existed in her imagination alone; "But I perceive," he continued, "that my fears, though hitherto confined to my own breast, are not without foundation. That obscure adventure Sir Almeric, whom the baron with his usual sagacity permitted to remain so long at the castle, did not neglect the opportunity of ingratiating himself into your favor. If I thought it possible, that a regard for him influenced you to reject the count, I would...."

Here suddenly checking himself, he stopped for an instant. "Let us waste no more time on so inconsiderable an object, but join the marchioness." This invitation Jacqueline declined, and insisted, notwithstanding her brother's remonstrances, on being permitted to return immediately to the baron. When

the marquis found his arguments and persuasions ineffectual, his rage was extreme; and swearing that she should never leave Etonbury castle till she was the count's wife, he quitted the apartment, and carefully secured the door.

The indignation which the conduct of the marquis excited had supported Jacqueline while in his presence, but in the solitude of her apartment she was unable to refrain from tears. Unfeeling and depraved as she knew the marquis to be, Jacqueline perceived with increased apprehension, that in this affair his conduct was regulated less by his own inclinations than the wishes of the marchioness.

As she was the zealous friend of the count, and had uniformly supported his pretensions, it was probable that all her

influence would now be exerted to insure his success.

Engaged in melancholy reflections on her situation, nearly half an hour had passed, when the marquis re-entered. He said that on consideration he regretted the warmth into which his regard for her had betrayed him; and as her desire to return to the baron was so violent, on one condition he would no longer oppose it.

With eagerness Jacqueline besought to mention the condition which was to restore her to liberty. "Only to oblige us with your company at a banquet with which the marchioness entertains some Italian friends this evening." To this proposal Jacqueline objected, that it would oblige her to defer her journey, which she was anxious to commence immediately. But the marquis

declared that the day was already too near closing for her to attempt returning then, and promised to give directions that at an early hour the next morning she should be properly escorted.

This assurance relieved Jacqueline, though her unwillingness to meet the count still rendered her desirous to avoid joining the party; but her pleas of fatigue and want of spirits were overruled by the marquis, and with extreme reluctance she consented to mingle in the festive scene.

Soon after the marquis had withdrawn, the attendant who before appeared entered, and offered her services to arrange the dress of Jacqueline. The time which intervened before she received the summons to descend, was spent in endeavouring to strengthen her

mind, that she might appear with fortitude and dignity in the ensuing interview with the marchioness and count.

As she advanced through the lofty colonnade which led to the saloon in which this entertainment was given in the Italian style, her ears were saluted with the most delightful harmony, proceeding from musicians stationed in the adjoining apartments.

The company were taking their seats at the table when Jacqueline entered. No one appeared to observe her; and while she hesitated whether to advance, a voice in a whisper said, "Do not sleep to night." Jacqueline started. She turned towards the side whence the sound proceeded. No person was near, but she perceived Blanche hastily gliding to the other side of the table,

and regarding her with a look that seemed to enjoin silence.

At this moment the marquis advanced, and taking the hand of Jacqueline, hastily led her to a seat between the count and another cavalier.

The marchioness and count overwhelmed her with professions of the happiness her presence conferred on them. Their studied and verbose speeches both offended and confused Jacqueline; and the latter sensation was increased by finding herself the object of general attention.

The party, with the exception of the marchioness, Blanche, and one other lady, whose physiognomy did not prejudice Jacqueline in her favor, consisted of gentlemen. The voice of one op-

posite to her, which she first heard in answer to a trifling question addressed to him under the title of the Chevalier De Sombreuil by the marchioness, made Jacqueline raise her eyes,' when she found him regarding her with a scrutinising gaze.

Again he spoke, again her looks were directed towards him; for in his voice, though softened, she thought she recognised that of her conductor, and of the unknown whom she had heard in the garden of Fitzbaynham castle. But her glances were unable either to confirm or dispel this conjecture; for during the whole journey the darkness had been too great for her to distinguish the countenance of the person who accompanied her.

The manners of the chevalier were reserved and haughty, wrapped in sul-

len disdain, he appeared contemplating rather than enjoying the gay scene; nor did he mingle in the conversation more than to reply to the questions which from time to time were addressed to him.

It was with uneasiness, that, in the few opportunities for observation which the troublesome assiduities of the count permitted, Jacqueline perceived that she chiefly engaged the attention of De Sombreuil. His dark eyes were almost constantly fixed on her, with a fierce yet melancholy expression.

In compliance with the general desire of the company, the marchioness had consented to sing; and after executing with great skill and taste a duet with the count, she requested Jacqueline to oblige them with an air. This proposal, warmly enforced by the count,

Jacqueline continued to decline; till wearied by their reiterated importunities, from which she found it impossible to free herself, she began a Spanish ballad which she had often sung to the late baroness, with whom it was a great favorite. This circumstance increased the delicate pathos which Jacqueline was accustomed to express in this tune, and rendered more impressive it's touching simplicity. From the moment of it's commencement the agitation of the chevalier had been apparent. He remained listening with extreme earnestness, while the rapid changes of his countenance revealed the variety and violence of his emotions. At it's conclusion he hastily left the saloon.

His conduct seemed to embarass the marchioness and count. For a few moments the former appeared thoughtful and perplexed, but she quietly resumed

her gaiety, and the continued absence of the chevalier remained unnoticed.

In this manner some hours had passed, and to the surprise of Jacqueline the marchioness appeared not to have any intention of retiring. The spirits of all were greatly exhilarated by the wine which had freely circulated; and as the marquis, though evidently disordered, contributed by his example and recommendation to pass it more quickly, the sportive sallies of the guests became less refined, and with astonishment Jacqueline beheld the behaviour of the marchioness, which instead of checking rather promoted this wild licence.

Tired of a scene which every moment rendered more disgusting, and offended by the speeches which the count now ventured to address to her, Jacqueline rose; and casting a glance of indigna-

tion on her brother, who had exposed her to this degrading situation, she advanced in silence towards the door. Blanche, who was hastily following her, resumed her seat by the command of the marchioness, who at the same time sounded a small silver bell placed on the table before her. Two domestics entered; and by her orders they attended Jacqueline to the apartment which she had before occupied, and immediately secured the door.

In the solitude of her chamber, Jacqueline reflected on the events of this evening. Far from lessening, they increased her uneasiness. The conduct of the marchioness and her renewed confinement were ill calculated to confirm the marquis's assurance of her early liberation on the ensuing morning. Her apprehensions and uncertainty on this subject were rendered

more distressing when she considered the misery which her continued absence would inflict on the baron.

This idea so fully engrossed her mind, that a considerable time elapsed before she recollected the mysterious words which had been addressed to her on her entrance into the saloon, and which from her looks she imagined to have proceeded from Blanche. But what could induce her to give so strange an injunction Jacqueline was unable to conjecture. The anxiety of her thoughts banished sleep, and drawing a chair to one of the windows, she remained ruminating on the past and present, and anticipating with dread the future.

The sounds of boisterous revelry which at intervals had reached her remote apartment had ceased; midnight had long been passed; and an unbroken

stillnes reigned in the castle. Without any light but that of the moon, which now and then emerging from a cloud, rendered the objects in her apartment for a few minutes visible, the hours moved heavily. Inspired by her desolate situation, an undefined honor of some impending evil was near seising her, when her attention attracted by a slight noise at the other end of the room. The door of what appeared to be a cabinet opened, and by the light of a lamp she discerned two persons, one of whom immediately entered her chamber.

CHAPTER XII.

> Away, away, behold a hideous band.
>
> SMART.

SURPRISED and terrified by this intrusion, Jacqueline hastily arose, and in breathless agitation beheld the advance of the stranger; who, having approached near to her, said, in a soft voice, which she immediately knew to be that of Blanche, "Be not alarmed. I come to liberate you; and mean, if you will permit it, to be the partner of your flight."

Finding Jacqueline remain silent, she continued, "Forgive the fears

which the mysterious injunction I whispered to you as you entered the saloon has no doubt excited, and which the strange method of gaining admittance to your apartment that I have been compelled to adopt must have increased."

"Strange indeed!" said Jacqueline: "Why this air of secresy should attend my departure I cannot conjecture. However, I thank the marquis for the consideration he has shown, by this early summons, for the impatience which he knows I feel to begin my journey."

"The marquis!" exclaimed Blanche. The marquis! Did he promise that you should quit the castle?"

"Is it not by his direction that you are here?"

"You have been cruelly deceived," replied Blanche. "It is indeed designed that you should leave the castle this morning. Within sight of these towers waits a vessel for the purpose of conveying you to Italy. In a few hours you will bid a long, if not an eternal, farewell to your native country."

"Your words astonish me. Who can project this violence?"

"The marchioness and Count Cajetan. An accident, too long to be now related, has partly revealed to me their intentions."

"The marquis, then, is ignorant of this scheme? Through the passage by which you have entered I will immediately seek him. From his protection surely they cannot attempt to wrest me."

Blanche now mentioned the situation of the marquis, who had been carried to his apartment in a state of insensibility, produced partly by his own intemperance, partly by design; for the count, to prevent any interruption to their plans by his interference, had stimulated him to more than usual excesses.

Convinced by this statement of the futility of her hopes of succour from her brother, Jacqueline remained in a thoughtful attitude. "Come," said Blanche, "the moments are preciou. Let us proceed."

Still Jacqueline continued silent, and irresolute, for the conduct of Blanche surprised her. With her motives and the nature of her connexion with the marchioness ,she was unacquainted. The scene which she had witnessed in the temple in the garden of the baron's

castle, between Blanche and the marquis, remained unexplained. Her recent sufferings had first taught her suspicion, and now made her pause on the offer of Blanche.

While she was thus hesitating, the door through which Blanche had entered, that had remained nearly closed, was suddenly thrust open. "Dispatch," said the man who was waiting there, at the same time raising his lamp to see better into the room; "I shall not stay many minutes longer."

"We are coming," answered Blanche, while she offered her hand to Jacqueline; whose dislike to these clandestine proceedings was not lessened by the the imperfect glimpse she had just had of the person who accompanied Blanche: and she was on the point of declining the proposal, when steps

sounded in the gallery with which her apartment communicated.

"Hush!" said Blanche softly; and, while earnestly listening, Jacqueline felt the hand that still retained hers tremble violently. "We have delayed too long; they are coming: Adieu!" And relinquishing the hand of Jacqueline, she sprung through the opening, and hastily shut the door.

Jacqueline now regretted her indecision. Influenced by the terror which the noise in the gallery had excited, she felt inclined to follow Blanche. Without any defined purpose she reached the cabinet, just as the door of it was again unclosed by Blanche, the image of despair, pale, and in tears.

"Our retreat is prevented," she exclaimed, on seeing Jacqueline; "and this ineffectual attempt will

only provoke the cruelty of our persecutors."

"Had you taken my advice, this danger would have been avoided," said the man; who, slowly following Blanche, approached as she concluded the former speech. "You might then have quitted the castle without any hazard; but you would not go till you had seen the Lady Jacqueline, and this is this consequence. However, I am not inclined to run any further risque, and have already fulfilled my engagement."

"Surely, Maurice, you will not leave us now?" said Blanche.

"The castle clock strikes three. I shall soon be called for, and must be at my station."

"Can no entreaties urge you to as-

sist us in this distress ?" replied Blanche: "with the wreck of my fallen fortunes I purchased your services, and you desert us when most we need you."

"Perhaps your friend is not so destitute, lady," rejoined Maurice, looking with greedy eyes on the rich jewels that adorned Jacqueline. . .

The generosity of Blanche, in endangering her own safety by attempting to serve her, deeply affected Jacqueline. She severely blamed herself for having indulged suspicion so injurious and undeserved, and lamented the distress which she had undesignedly occasioned. Had she still harboured any doubts of Blanche, her grief and alarm, too natural to be counterfeited, would have renewed them.

Roused by the last speech of Maurice, and strongly moved with pity for Blanche, Jacqueline did not hesitate to detain him by the sacrifice of her necklace.

"Aye," said Maurice, eagerly taking it, "this is a solid and glittering argument. It has brightened my wit sufficiently to make one more effort for your escape. But you must follow my counsel, or I renounce all further attempts in your favor.

He then proposed to Jacqueline to proceed into the passage, that he might close the door of the cabinet, lest any one should enter her chamber from the gallery. With this advice she readily complied, but expressed her fears, should her absence be discovered before they had left the castle; which, from what Blanche had said, she un-

derstood was not practicable at present.

The assurances of Maurice, that this entrance to her apartment was known, to few, if any, beside himself, in the castle, of which he was warden, lessened in some degree her alarm. In this place, alone, he declared, could they expect to avoid detection, should a search be instituted.

As they advanced along the narrow winding passage, preceded by Maurice, who carried the lamp, Blanche informed Jacqueline that it terminated in one of the galleries into which the apartments of the marchioness opened; and that she and Count Cajetan were now there consulting: till they separated, it would not be possible to quit their present concealment.

On approaching the end, they listened attentively; and concluding, from the continued stillness that the gallery was unoccupied, Maurice proceeded cautiously to move the pannel; but hastily reclosed it, on perceiving the marchioness and count at the other extremity.

This apartment was so extensive that the voices of the marchioness and count, as they traversed it in earnest discourse, were seldom sufficiently audible for the fugitives to distinguish the subject of their conference. From the few sentences which reached them, they found that Cajetan was expostulating with the marchioness against the attendance of the Chevalier De Sombreuil, who, at her desire, was to accompany the count in the proposed voyage.

"Come, come, my dear Cajetan," said the marchioness, "say no more on this subject. If you persist, I shall have a violent suspicion of your intentions. I confess the temptation is great, and you ought to thank me for preserving you from the danger to which your yielding to it would expose you. You know my disposition, and must be aware that I am not to be duped with impunity."

"You entirely mistake my motives," replied the count.

"Perhaps I do," rejoined the marchioness, interrupting him; and moving out, they were beyond hearing.

Their conversation lasted till the patience of Maurice was so far exhausted, that it was with diffioulty the joint entreaties of Jacqueline and Blanche

could prevail on him not to leave them, which he frequently threatened. But their tears and distress had less effect on the heart of this mercenary wretch, than the rich sprig of diamonds which Jacqueline, terrified by the apprehension of his desertion, detached from her head-dress, and presented to him.

The count at length quitted the gallery, and their spirits were beginning to revive with the hope that the marchioness would now withdraw. But short-lived was this hope; for she was almost immediately joined by the Chevalier De Sombreuil.

"You sent for me, lady; and I am here. What is your pleasure?" said he as he entered.

"Chevalier," replied the marchioness, "your important services make

me feel interested in all that affects you. It was with concern I observed your emotion during the song of the Lady Jacqueline."

"You wish to know why I was so moved?" interrupted De Sombreuil.

"I am only anxious to learn the cause, that I may remove the uneasiness that oppresses you."

"And gratify your curiosity."

"De Sombreuil, you forget yourself," said the marchioness haughtily.

"I thought that we had known each other better," he replied; "but depend, lady, whatever is the cause, it will not make me less faithful to you."

"I did not distrust you," rejoined the marchioness in a careless yet indignant tone.

"Why did you mention this subject? Was it only to question me on this that I was summoned? Beware, lady, how you act thus. To gratify a trifling passion, you have jarred a chord that vibrates to madness; the link on which my destiny is strung. It was enough to know, to feel; interrogation is not to be endured."

While Maurice was securing Jacqueline's valuable gift, he placed the lamp on the ground, leaning it's side against the wall. Too much engaged with his splendid prize to recollect it's situation, he struck it with his foot. It fell with considerable noise, and was immediately extinguished.

" What is that?" exclaimed the marchioness in alarm.

" Some person is listening," said De Sombreuil: " a false step has betrayed them. Who is in the adjoining rooms?"

" No one," replied the marchioness: " I have dismissed my attendants."

" Is there no place of concealment?" inquired the chevalier: " it was from this direction the sound came;" advancing, as he spoke, towards the passage which contained Jacqueline and Blanche, who, overcome by the dread of discovery, scarcely retained their senses.

They heard De Sombreuil touch the pannel; and their terror was increased when Maurice in a whisper expressed

his fears lest the hand of the chevalier should press the spring, as he passed it along the wainscoat. "You are sure there is no opening here?" said he to the marchioness.

"None to my knowlege. Indeed how should there be? In that part of the gallery there is no door. I do not like this noise," she continued.

"It is the effect of treachery," rejoined the chevalier: "let me but find them, and they shall dearly pay for their impertinent curiosity."

"Come to me, De Sombreuil," said the marchioness; "I am faint. This is a most unpleasant occurrence. Were not these sounds like those we heard on that fatal night at Venice? I am not superstitious, but I wish this noise had not occurred."

"Is it possible you can suffer yourself to be thus moved by so trifling a cause?" Perceiving the alteration of the marchioness' countenance, he continued, "Allow me to call your women. You are pale."

"I am indeed not well. I will retire for a short time. But remember I must see you before you depart."

On the entrance of an attendant the chevalier left the gallery; and the marchioness dispatching a message for Blanche to come to her immediately, withdrew to her dressing-room.

The embarrassment of Blanche, on hearing this order, was extreme. Her absence from her apartment would now be discovered, and probably occasion a search for her. This unexpected impediment was the more vexatious, by

happening at the very instant when an opportunity was afforded them of prosecuting their attempt.

In this difficulty, she requested the advice of Jacqueline and Maurice. The latter (his naturally bad temper not improved by the recent danger which his own imprudence had incurred) insisted, in rather unceremonious terms, on Blanche's obeying the order of the marchioness. That, he declared, was the only means by which he could avoid detection: and having already encountered so many risques in his endeavouring to assist them, he was resolved not to expose himself to any more. If Blanche hesitated he threatened immediately to abandon them; and concluded by saying he should proceed to the east turret, which at this advanced hour was the only way by which they could quit the castle. He

proposed that Jacqueline should accompany him, and there wait till Blanche was able to rejoin her.

Though this plan was not agreeable to either of the ladies, they were obliged to acquiesce in it; for Maurice, as soon as he had spoken, removing the pannel, entered the gallery, and motioning them to follow him, he immediately reclosed it. Then hastening to one of the doors, he beckoned Jacqueline, who, unwilling to be separated from Blanche, still lingered, till the steps of some one approaching did not permit her longer to delay. As she and Maurice left the gallery, the attendant who had been sent for Blanche, entered on the opposite side.

Jacqueline now found herself on a small landing-place, and perceived be-

fore her a flight of steps. Having descended these, Maurice led the way to a wide and almost dark passage. By the faint light admitted through the windows, placed at considerable intervals, Jacqueline could discern that it's decorations were greatly inferior to those of the other parts of the building which she had seen. The forlorn appearance of the place, the hour, joined to the silence and increased speed of Maurice, excited in the mind of Jacqueline a most distressing apprehension, and almost involuntarily she slackened her pace.

This man had proved himself sordid and unfeeling. Perhaps urged by the prospect of reward, he was now conducting her to some secure part of the castle, whence she should never be delivered but into the hands of Cajetan.

"Come, lady," said Maurice, looking back, "quicken your steps, or I shall be obliged to leave you to find your way as you can. The chimes are now striking the third quarter, and in a few minutes I am to meet the count."

"Meet the count! Then what will become of me?" exclaimed Jacqueline.

"That is no affair of mine," rejoined Maurice; "but if you really wish to escape you have no time to lose. As waiting for the lady Blanche, it is quite impossible. I mentioned her joining you, only to prevent her delaying us longer."

"I shall not leave the castle without her," replied Jacqueline, highly offended by this brutal speech.

" As you please," rejoined he; " I only warn you this is the last opportunity you will have. Nay, by the mass, it is now too late, for I hear the count calling for me." With these words he hastened forward. Jacqueline too had heard the voice of Cajetan, who at the entrance meeting Maurice, censured him for his want of punctuality.

Cruelly alarmed, Jacqueline eagerly sought for some shelter. A small recess in which a statue had formerly been placed, appeared on one side. With some difficulty she succeeded in entering it. Slender as was the concealment of this niche, she hoped, from it's situation in a dark and remote part, to escape the observation of the count.

Scarcely had she time to accomplish her retreat, before he and Maurice ad-

vanced down the passage. After commenting at considerable length on the negligence of the warden, to the great terror of Jacqueline, who trembled lest in his own vindication he should divulge the cause of his detention, the count directed him to proceed to the east tower, and remain there till he received further orders; at the same time saying that Leopold and Benedetto were already there. They then separated, and Jacqueline thought by the count's manner that the conduct of Maurice had awakened suspicion.

For a considerable time Jacqueline remained in her unpleasant station. At first she hoped that Maurice would return and seek her, but his continued absence taught her the futility of this expectation. Blanche too did not appear. By staying in this remote spot she might meet her; and yet to wander

in the intricasies of the castle, offered scarcely more chance of meeting her, while it exposed herself to detection.

At length, weary of uncertainty, she was on the point of moving, with the intention of seeking her way to the east turret when the approach of some person made her pause. She indistinctly perceived a figure moving down the passage. It frequently stopped; and from the attitude, Jacqueline conjectured it was looking back. It was shrouded in a dark garment, and the slow stealing pace in which it moved, imparted a supernatural air to it's motions.

Jacqueline watched it with an earnestness nearly allied to terror, while with increased surprise she heard her name pronounced in a scarcely audible tone. Again it was repeated, and now with

extreme joy Jacqueline recognised the voice of Blanche, whom, springing from her concealment, she instantly joined.

"Let us proceed. There is not a moment to be lost," said Blanche. "The count suspects that some plot is in agitation, and is coming this way almost immediately." Having wrapped Jacqueline in a dark cloak similar to her own, which would render them less liable to observation, she led the way through the passage, and descending a long flight of steps they came to a smaller avenue, terminated by a door partly open.

The apartment was lighted, and they could perceive three men sitting round a table drinking, one of whom they distinguished to be Maurice. The boisterous mirth in which they were in-

dulging prevented the approach of Jacqueline and Blanche from being noticed.

"It is as I feared," said Blanche. "This is the east turret, and through that room we must pass, or it is impossible to escape."

"What can be done?" inquired Jacqueline.

"Alas! I know not," replied Blanche. "After encountering so many difficulties, it will indeed be hard to fail now. To remain here is to suffer certain destruction; yet, to retreat or to proceed seems equally impracticable. Hark! Did not you hear something move on the staircase?" At the same time seising the arm of Jacqueline she hurried forward, till compelled to stop lest the persons in the room should observe them.

Finding all remain quiet behind them, they were recovering from this alarm, which the fear of Blanche had occasioned, when the conversation of Maurice and his party, which they were now sufficiently near to distinguish, renewed their agitation.

"Positively this is the last," said Maurice, raising a large glass; which having emptied, he continued, "The count will be here in a few minutes, and you ought to have fetched the boat round before this. Come, come, be off at once, my lads, or we shall get into trouble. I have had risques enough for one night, and do not relish the thought of encountering more."

Both his companions eagerly besought him to explain his last words. At first he refused; but, subdued by their importunities, and his prudence

lulled by the liquor he had been taking in no small quantity, he was about to disclose the scheme of Blanche, who, together with Jacqueline, at this cruel moment felt every ray of hope extinguished.

Their anguish was almost beyond increase, when, to their utter consternation, at the same instant they heard the voice of the count as he descended the stairs, speaking in a loud tone to some person who accompanied him, and whom from the answer they suspected to be the Chevalier De Sombreuil.

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During the pause which preceded the expected recital of Maurice, he and his comrades distinguished the approach of the count. Rising in confusion, they extinguished the lights, while Maurice, crying " Flee, flee, for

your lives," opened a door on the opposite side, through which they precipitately quitted the room.

"Follow me," said Blanche; and hastily gliding across the apartment, unperceived by Maurice, who was occupied in removing the glasses, she and Jacqueline found themselves at the head of some stone steps, down which they advanced, guided by the tread of the men, who at a short distance preceded them.

Near the bottom they stopped, finding that the men had done the same; and heard them removing the strong fastening of the gate at the entrance of the turret. After a short interval, by the light admitted through the portal, Jacqueline and Blanche discerned them pass out hastily, leaving the door unclosed.

The fugitives lost not an instant in profiting by this fortunate circumstance. Indeed had they delayed but a few seconds longer, their detection would have been inevitable: for the count, surprised by not finding Benedetto or Leopold returned, was on the point of descending in search of them.

On emerging from the turret, Jacqueline and Blanche perceived the men gazing towards the sea. Taking an opposite direction, they soon turned an angle of the castle; and passing unobserved under the walls, they gained without molestation the adjoining heath, across which, animated by hope, and impelled by fear, they pursued their flight with the utmost speed.

CHAPTER XIII.

Struck through and through, in ghastly stare,
She stands transfixed, the statue of despair.

SAVAGE.

JACQUELINE and Blanche continued their rapid course for a considerable way over an open country, till their progress was stopped by an arm of the sea.

On quitting the castle, anxious only to be at a distance from it, and ignorant whither any path led, they had taken the first which presented itself; but from this in their hurry and alarm they soon wandered, their attention

being chiefly engaged in endeavouring to discern through the mists of early morning whether there were any signs of pursuit. Terror had hitherto rendered them insensible to fatigue, but as that emotion subsided, they experienced the greatest weariness.

The spot in which they now found themselves was desolate and barren, possessing no traces of vegetation except a few scattered trees. The only dwelling that appeared in this dreary place was a cottage erected on the margin of the creek, which, broad and deep, extended inland to a considerable distance.

Jacqueline proposed to Blanche, who seemed incapable of proceeding further, that they should endeavour to reach the cottage, where probably they should be able to procure some refreshment.

As they drew near it displayed the most uninviting appearance: cheerless and forlorn, it seemed the abode of wretchedness. On knocking at the door a female voice directed them to enter. As they entered, the same voice continued, "What has brought you back so soon, Gilbert?" At the same time they perceived issuing from behind a curtain, which divided this room, the only one in the hovel, an old woman in figure and dress exactly corresponding with her miserable dwelling.

At sight of the strangers she stopped, and remained staring at them with a look of fear and astonishment, while Jacqueline, briefly mentioning their situation, inquired whether there was any place in the neighbourhood where they could be accommodated; the squalid figure before her, together with

the poverty and dirt apparent in the interior of the hut, having caused her to alter her first intention.

The woman, after replying that there was no habitation for some miles, asked whether they were alone; and being answered that they were, her countenance expressed satisfaction.

Jacqueline next inquired whether she knew at what distance they were from Fitzbaynham castle. The woman started, and regarded Jacqueline with surprise and dismay. After muttering something to herself, she replied, "A long way: but what have you to do with the castle? Do you know any one there?".

Being informed who Jacqueline was, she exclaimed, " You the baron's daughter! What could possibly bring

you here, lady? I am amazed how they let you escape." On hearing these words, Blanche sunk down on the rude bench which was the only seat in the room; and it was with difficulty she could be prevented from fainting.

Having in some measure restored her, Jacqueline questioned the woman whether she knew Count Cajetan; and Blanche earnestly implored her not to betray them. These speeches threw the woman into great perplexity; and she in turn inquired who the count was, declaring that she knew no one of that name.

At this moment a long shrill whistle sounded. On hearing it, the woman exclaimed, "There is Gilbert. O what can I do? If he sees you, your death is certain. I would not have such a deed

committed here for the world. I could never stay in the place after. Whenever the wind blew, or the sea roared, I should think it was your ghost coming."

Jacqueline and Blanche, extremely terrified, besought the woman to save them. "I do not know what to do. Here," said she, raising the corner of the curtain, "conceal yourselves behind that straw. Heaven grant that he may not discover you!"

As she said this, a man entered the hut. "To whom are you speaking?" said he.

"I was only wondering that you had returned so soon."

"For what is this door open? How often have I told you to keep it shut?"

"I have been looking out for you."

"Is that all? The moment that I find you deceive me shall be your last. Here, take these things," giving her a cutlass and dagger stained with blood; "and put whatever fare you have on the table. Jacques and Rodolph will be here presently."

"What is the matter with your arm, Gilbert? Are you wounded?"

"Yes, yes," said he, "I have a gash, or you would not have seen me so soon; but he who gave this will never give another. Has Jasper been here yet?"

"No. Do you expect him?"

"Suppose I do. Is his coming of any importance to you?"

The woman was about to reply, when two men approached the hut. "Come, come, comrades," said Gilbert, as they entered, "here is something to reward your toil," pointing to the table on which the woman was placing the homely contents of her larder. "Is all safely stowed away?"

"Yes, yes," replied one, "they are all safe. I would defy a whole troop of horse to find them. And here is something for us to drink our patron's health," drawing from under his cloak a bottle. They now sat down to their rude meals with appetites too keen to admit of much conversation.

During this scene, Jacqueline and Blanche, who had crept to the opposite of a heap of straw that served as a bed, were able, through a rent in the sail-cloth which formed the curtain, to

perceive what passed. The coarse brutal manners and ferocious looks of the men shocked them, and demonstrated that in case of discovery all attempts to mollify them would be vain. Each had revolved in silence various modes of escape, but none seemed practicable; and they dared not communicate their thoughts, lest their voices should betray them.

Occupied in painful reflections on the events of the night, and in gloomy anticipations of the future, the fugitives passed the time while the men were engaged at their repast; till towards it's conclusion the attention of Jacqueline was attracted to the discourse which the opening of the bottle brought by Rodolph had introduced.

"Come," said Gilbert, filling a glass, "let us begin with our patron

Here is the earl's health, and may he often employ us on such adventures." In this toast he was pledged by his two companions.

"Aye," said Jacques, "a few more such enterprises, and we may purchase absolution of his holiness himself, and live ever after like those would-be-thought saints, who with a fair exterior indulge in every vice and pleasure."

"Why, to be sure," Rodolph replied, "this has been a successful business, though it has cost us a few of our brave fellows. However, we revenged their deaths. Who could have expected that old lord to have made so much resistance? Egad, it was warm work when he appeared. I thought once we should not have been able to keep our ground. Poor Everard! I was sorry when I saw him fall."

"He fell in the bed of honor. The groans of his enemies were his requiem. I only regret that knight Sir Almeric was not among them."

"His turn is not come yet."

Rodolph exclaimed, "By the mass, I wish it were! I long to have a stroke at him, and if it should not be the lightest I ever gave, for all the friends and the losses his officious bravery has cost us. He would not find it easy to escape."

"I am surprised," said the woman, who had hitherto listened in silence, "how you came to let the lady escape."

"Who told you she had?" inquired Gilbert, while his countenance assumed a more stern expression, as

perceiving her confused and hesitating, he repeated his question in a louder tone.

"No one. I know nothing about it. Indeed how should I? But I thought...."

"What did you think?" interrupted he in a furious voice.

"Only that you had not seen her, because you did not speak of her, and she is very beautiful."

"How should you know what she is? I suppose Jasper has been telling you about her. That is a fellow I do not like; always meddling in what does not belong to him."

"If he never acts worse, you may forgive him."

"But let us have done with this subject. I have a plan come into my head," said Jacques. "Suppose we return in the evening. The others will be off by that time, and we shall have a rich booty to divide among ourselves." This proposal was eagerly accepted, and Jacques and Rodolph rose to leave the hut, in order to prepare for their intended excursion; and it was settled that Gilbert, as he was wounded, should remain and take some rest till they called for him.

Inviting them to stay, Gilbert advanced towards the curtain. At this motion the woman in great agitation inquired whether he wanted anything. Bidding her not be troublesome, he began to raise the cloth; but immediately desisted, finding that the exertion rendered his wound painful: and directed her to fetch a bottle from the hamper last brought in, saying that

Jacques's plan deserved to have success drank to it in burgundy.

Finding that the woman staid longer than he expected, and impatient for the liquor, he called to her to make more haste. "I am coming," said she, "but it is at the bottom and not easy to reach.

"Pshaw!" cried Gilbert, "that helpless fool can never do anything. Rodolph, assist her, or we shall not get the wine." As Rodolph was advancing for this purpose, she appeared with the bottle, which was quickly emptied.

Jacques and Rodolph being departed, Gilbert drew the bench nearer the few embers that glowed on the hearth, while the woman busied herself in removing the remains of their repast. Her eyes were frequently directed to the window;

and her attention being thus engaged, she was careless of her motions, and more than once made a considerable noise, which drew on her a severe reprimand from Gilbert, whose slumbers she thus disturbed.

Before he had again composed himself, Jasper arrived; and Gilbert, execrating his delay, immediately quitted the cottage to join him.

Jacqueline seised this opportunity of speaking to the woman, and inquired whether there was a possibility of their escaping while Gilbert was absent. "O no," replied the woman, "he is only gone to the boat to speak to Jasper, and will be back directly. I know not what to do with you. It was a most unlucky hour for me that brought you here."

Jacqueline proposed one or two of the expedients that had occurred to her. "There is only one chance for you," said the woman. "If I can see Jasper before he goes, perhaps for a handsome reward he would take you in his boat to the other side of the creek."

On hearing this, Jacqueline put into the hand of the woman some pieces of money, promising her more if she succeeded in this attempt; and both she and Blanche requested her to lose no time in releasing them from their perilous situation.

"This," said the woman, looking at the money Jacqueline had given her, "cannot preserve me from the fury of Gilbert. He is dreadfully cruel. You heard how he threatened me. If I did not think he would murder me for hav-

ing concealed you at first, I should be tempted to tell him that you are here, rather than incur any further risque; for I tremble so with fear I wonder he has not observed it. Then how much danger there is of Jasper's betraying me. I must conceal from him who you are; for if he knew, I am sure he hates the baron so he would never assist you to escape."

The return of Gilbert prevented any answer to this alarming speech. Resuming his seat, he bade the woman fetch some fresh straw, at the same time expressing his intention of lying down. Her absence was protracted till Gilbert, losing all patience, had nearly exhausted his stock of curses, before she entered accompanied by Jasper.

" Where have you staid?" exclaim-

ed Gilbert, starting up and seising her, again repeating his question in a furious passion. Jasper interfered, and with some difficulty extricated her from his grasp; and having succeeded in appeasing his anger, informed him that he had something of importance to communicate.

"What!" said Gilbert, "is there any danger? Have we been traced?"

"I have observed two horsemen at a distance, who are advancing in this direction."

"Are you sure they are none of our troop?"

"Yes, I took care to ascertain that, by making the usual signal, before I came to you. At the rate they were coming, they must pretty near by this time."

This intelligence had dispelled all inclination to sleep; and Gilbert, after ordering the woman to remove the curtain, that there might be no appearance of concealment, sallied out with Jasper; saying, "let us appear: otherwise they may give us the slip, and pass by without stopping, thinking the place uninhabited. Were it not for this infernal wound, we should be a match for them ourselves; and then all the profit would be our own."

"Perhaps they are travellers," replied Jasper. "I wish Jacques and Rodolph were here. Who knows what a rich booty we may lose, for want of more hands? However, we must detain them till some of our comrades come."

This occurrence excited in Jacqueline and Blanche no small uneasiness as

they scarcely doubted that these horsemen were dispatched by the count in pursuit of them: and as the woman, terrified by the recent passion of Gilbert, could not be prevailed on either by entreaties or promises to delay taking down the curtain, their situation became no longer tenable. Conducting them to the entrance, the woman pointed to a pile of straw at a short distance behind the hut, where they would probably be able to secret themselves; and thus saying without any further ceremony, she closed the door.

Jacqueline and Blanche lost no time in following the directions of their hostess, and with considerable difficulty contrived to enter a chasm in the stack, unseen by Jasper or Gilbert, occupied on the other side in observing the strangers who were now within a short distance.

The fugitives had taken their station but a few minutes, before, to their extreme terror, they distinguished the voices of Maurice and a domestic of the count, as they passed within a few yards of them, together with Gilbert and his associate.

A considerable interval now elapsed, and Jacqueline was conferring with Blanche in a low tone on the best plan to be adopted, when they were startled by hearing some one moving close to them.

" If you are still there, come out at once," said the woman, who, supposing that they had followed her advice, was in quest of them. " How much trouble and vexation have you occasioned! Here is a loss indeed! Such a sum as I might have had for you! But

that Gilbert is so fierce and furious, I dared not own that you were here."

"Are the men gone?" inquired Jacqueline, who now ventured to quit her retreat.

"What is the use of that question? I suppose you do not wish to see them," replied the woman.

"Have you spoken to Jasper yet?" asked Blanche.

"No, nor do I intend. You must think me mad surely to tell him, after denying to have seen you. However, you can remain there no longer. Beyond that tall tree yonder you may meet with some fishermen."

At this moment they heard the voice

of Gilbert calling for the woman, who, leaving them, ran hastily to the cottage; while Jacqueline and Blanche, with trembling steps, pursued their way to the tree which she had pointed out. Having reached it, they descried a boat close to the shore, and a man on the sands collecting his nets and placing them in it.

Animated by this sight, they quickened their pace. The liberal sum which Jacqueline offered removed all difficulties; and, in compliance with their desire, the man immediately put to sea. Jacqueline directed him to land them at the nearest place to the baron's castle, which with surprise she heard it would be impossible to reach, even with a favorable wind, before the evening, the distance by sea being much greater than by land.

The various dangers and continual alarms to which they had been exposed, had hitherto, prevented Blanche from explaining the motives that induced her to flee from the protection of the marchioness; but now the rapidity of their course relieving them from the dangers of pursuit, turning to Jacqueline, she said, "I am aware that my conduct in many instances must appear strange, in some, I fear, censureable. Although at present I feel myself unable to give the recital necessary to explain my actions, I cannot omit seising with avidity this opportunity of entreating you to view with favor what appears questionable, and to consider with indulgence the exceptionable situations in which my unfortunate destiny has placed me. If you desert me, I am desolate indeed."

Touched by these words, and the pathetic tone in which they were uttered, Jacqueline, taking the hand of Blanche, expressed in the most friendly terms the gratitude with which her recent services had inspired her; and assuring Blanche that she might rely on the protection of the baron, she entreated her to dismiss all uneasiness on that subject.

The two friends, relieved from the apprehensions of pursuit, and lulled by the undulating motion of the vessel, no longer resisted the inclination to sleep, but wrapping themselves in their cloaks, they sunk into a settled repose.

When they awoke, the day was drawing to a close; and the fisherman, pointing out to Jacqueline, through a break in the cliff, the towers of Fitz-baynham castle, informed her that they

had nearly completed their voyage. In a short time they landed on the beach at the top of the hill on which that fortress stood; and, having amply recompensed their conductor, they proceeded with the light step of joy towards the path that led to the castle.

At a small distance from the road was a dwelling belonging to one of the baron's vassals, where Jacqueline proposed calling, to obtain the protection of the rustic during the rest of their walk, as she perceived that the evening would be far advanced before they could reach her father's residence.

Having knocked twice without receiving any answer, Jacqueline, impatient of delay, opened the door, and, to her astonishment and disappointment, found the cottage empty. Regretting the time spent in this attempt,

they returned to the road, and proceeded forward at a quick pace, for twilight had already commenced.

As they approached the castle, Jacqueline was surprised to observe no light either in the towers along the fortifications or in the interior of the building. On arriving at the barbacan, her astonishment was increased at finding it unoccupied by the usual guard, and the drawbridge lowered. Passing over, she perceived the portcullis raised and the gate open. In the outward court not a human being was visible. It seemed as if some terrible visitation had suddenly destroyed every thing capable of life; and the aspect of the inner court, equally deserted, was gloomy and desolate.

The doors of the principal entrance were unclosed, and entering the hall,

Jacqueline sunk on a seat, overcome by this new and unexpected misfortune; while Blanche, unable to afford consolation, remained silent, reflecting with keen anguish on the disappointment of those hopes of security and peace to which the kindness of Jacqueline had given birth.

Suddenly an idea occurred to Jacqueline, which gathered strength the more she reflected on it. She recollected the singular conduct of the woman at the cottage of Gilbert, together with the conversation she had there heard, which she now felt convinced must have alluded to the attack of Fitzbaynham castle. Yet so strange and even wonderful was it, that a band of outlaws should succeed in an attempt on a fortress almost impregnable, and which had withstood many sieges from a regular army, conducted with

skill and judgement, that Jacqueline was almost inclined to doubt the evidence of her senses; and so various were her emotions, that she was unable for some time to collect her thoughts.

At first surprise and amazement had absorbed every other sensation, but, as these subsided, she became sensible to grief; and this emotion was augmented as her eye glanced over the well-remembered objects imperfectly revealed by the last shadowy light of evening. In place of the fond greetings pronounced by the lips of affectionate relatives, which used to welcome her after occasional absences, she now returned to the hall of her ancestors amid darkness and silence unbroken and oppressive as that of the grave.

Having indulged the first burst of sorrow, the habitual fortitude of her

character returned; and she was arranging with Blanche the plan most prudent to be adopted in this emergency, when they were startled by the sound of steps approaching. Night had long commenced, but through the numerous entrances, most of which were open, a faint gloomy light was admitted. At one of these, on the opposite side, they now discerned a man standing.

Jacqueline concluding that this was either Gilbert, or one of his associates, returned to execute the project which she had overheard them forming, felt the utmost terror. The door of the avenue that led to the chapel was unclosed; and as she looked round in search of some place of concealment, she beheld this passage, and hope revived within her bosom. It's sacred walls offered protection. Suddenly ris-

ing, she said to Blanche, "At the altar we shall at least find safety."

While this passed, the man had disappeared from the entrance; but whether he had retreated, or entered the hall, they were unable to ascertain. Proceeding cautiously through the gallery which communicated with the chapel, they reached the steps of the altar unmolested.

The imposing magnificence of this venerable pile, seen under such circumstances, and at such an hour, appeared sublimely awful; dimly illuminated by the pale light of the moon, rendered more faint by the richly painted glass that composed the windows.

At a small distance, on one side of the altar, stood the simple but elegant monument of the late baroness. This

silent memento of her beloved parent renewed in the bosom of Jacqueline that piercing regret which time had softened without obliterating; and the remembrance of those hours of sweet tranquillity which maternal tenderness had consecrated, increased her affliction. From the midst of danger and desolation she looked to brilliant and happy recollections; as one who wandering under a gloomy sky, and shadowed by clouds, sees a distant landscape glittering in the sun. Kneeling before the tomb, her head resting on the cold marble, she remained for some minutes overwhelmed with grief; but it had been her pride to imitate the virtues which she cherished in her memory with reverential affection; and as she recollected the resignation and fortitude of the baroness, she acknowleged with a blush her weak despondency.

Impressed with this sentiment, she arose and approached Blanche, who had remained at the steps of the altar. Finding her oppressed by the chilly dampness of the building, Jacqueline changed her intention of passing the night in the chapel, and proposed their attempting to reach her apartments, which would be more agreeable, and perhaps equally secure.

On regaining the hall, they paused to listen, and with an anxious glance surveyed the numerous entrances. No sound broke the profound stillness, except at intervals the fluttering of the banners, suspended from the pillars, as the wind rushed impetuously through the wide door-way that communicated with the court.

They had begun to cross this vast apartment, when a sudden flash of

light, reflected on the opposite wall, made them hastily return; and they perceived three men issuing from an avenue which communicated with the interior of the castle. The first man carried a torch, and was followed by the others, bearing a chest between them.

As they passed at a short distance before the recess into which Jacqueline and Blanche had retired, by the strong glare of the torches they distinguished the countenances of Gilbert and his associates. "Come," said he, "make more haste, or we shall not have time to take half these treasures. I wish we had more hands."

"Never fear," replied Jacques; "the night is yet young, and we are not tired. But raise the light a little, that we may see which is the right path.

Where did you leave the horses, Rodolph?"

"In the inner court, close to the entrance of the hall."

"It was a strange fancy of our patron," said Jaçques, while they stood for a few instants to rest their heavy burthen, "to neglect all these riches, and think only of securing the lady."

"Aye," exclaimed Gilbert, "some people have extraordinary tastes."

"I think it is more surprising that she contrived to elude his search," said Rodolph.

"It was that search which robbed us of so many of our brave friends. Who would not have thought, from the desperate valor of the old lord, that his

daughter was there? I admire bravery so much, that, notwithstanding my regard for our troop, I was almost sorry when the baron fell."

They had proceeded too far for the trembling fugitives to distinguish more of their conversation; but the rays of the torch were long visible after the persons who bore it disappeared, and the echoes of their steps were repeated in many reverations amid the vaulted roof.

The last speech of Gilbert excited in the bosom of Jacqueline the deepest anguish. She considered it as the annunciation of her father's death. Lost in the distress which this supposition occasioned, she remained silent, till Blanche, anxious for their safety, proposed their seeking some more secure retreat before the return of the ruffians.

Darkness and silence again reigned in the hall, when Jacqueline and Blanche, gliding softly between the pillars, entered the gallery communicating with the part of the castle occupied by the suit of apartments appropriated to Jacqueline. The ground here was strewed with broken weapons and the fragments of armor. As they advanced, their steps were almost impeded by these vestiges of war. As the moon shone brightly through the windows of the corridor, with indescribable emotions they discerned stretched before them the bodies of several vassals and soldiers, who had fallen in the recent engagement.

Too much shocked by this spectacle to proceed, Jacqueline turned into an apartment the door of which was open. This room, as the gallery, presented a scene of death, and with difficulty

Jacqueline supported herself on the arm of Blanche. Overcome by the distressing idea which seised her mind, she paused and scarcely replied, while her eyes glanced with almost frensied haste on the bodies that surrounded her, in the sad apprehension of beholding among them her father's mangled form.

During this scrutiny, she was startled by hearing a faint groan which proceeded from the other end of the apartment. The alarm, occasioned by this unexpected sound, was transient, for Jacqueline immediately concluded that it arose from some wounded sufferer perishing for want of assistance; and struggling with the horror of her situation, she advanced towards the spot whence the sound had issued.

On a sopha, motionless and appa-

rently lifeless, she beheld a person extended, and beside him in an attitude of sorrow was standing another, who, roused by the approach of Jacqueline from his melancholy musing, regarded her with evident surprise. Terrified by this unexpected occurrence, Jacqueline was retreating, when in a respectful manner he exclaimed, "Do I indeed behold the lady Jacqueline?"

These words relieved the fears of Jacqueline, for she immediately recognised the voice of Arthur, the principal attendant on the baron, and eagerly inquired of him respecting her father. With hesitation and reluctance Arthur acquainted her that it was over with the baron, who had fainted through loss of blood, that he was then watching. [illegible]s information at first nearly reduced Jacqueline to a similar state; but

quickly subduing her feelings, she anxiously sought to relieve her father.

Finding all her endeavours to restore him ineffectual, she inquired of Arthur for Father Osborne. He had been carried, together with all her attendants, from the castle; and Arthur himself was indebted to a fortunate chance for his liberty. " For at the time the baron fell," he continued, " the conflict was dreadful, till a severe wound which the earl received, compelled him to retire, after giving orders that all who survived should be detained prisoners, and immediately removed from the castle. It was nearly dusk before all his followers had departed, when quitting my place of confinement, I reached this room, and with considerable difficulty succeeded in finding the bar[illegible] almost covered by the bodies of his faithful

vassals, who had fallen in his defence."

A slight motion of the baron revived the hopes of Jacqueline. In a few minutes he unclosed his eyes; and though extremely weak, his senses were restored. Arthur cautiously informed him of the unexpected return of Jacqueline.

This intelligence inspired the baron with new strength; and Jacqueline, who, apprehensive of the effect which her sudden appearance might produce in his present debilitated state, had removed out of his sight, no longer resisted the strong impulse of affection, but threw herself on her knees beside him, and clasped her hand in silence, for her emotions were too powerful to admit of words.

A few moments dissolved the rapturous sensations which this unhoped reunion had occasioned. The transient flush which joy had kindled on the baron's cheek, was succeeded by a deadly paleness. His strength was so exhausted as to threaten a relapse; and to the agonised fears of Jacqueline he appeared dying.

The assurances of Arthur, that these symptoms were merely the result of weakness, in some degree lessened her alarm; but she felt the utmost anxiety to remove the baron to a place of security, where he might receive immediate assistance: but whither to retreat, or how to accomplish his removal, Jacqueline was not able to determine. Delay might be fatal, and every instant they were exposed to the intrusion of Gilbert and his associates,

whose voices and steps, as they passed and re-passed in the hall, indistinctly reached this remote apartment.

In this dilemma Arthur proposed their retiring to the baron's château in Guienne, where he had formerly resided, but which had not been visited by the family for many years. The proposal was approved by Jacqueline, and she immediately consulted with Arthur on the means of accomplishing it.

At this time their attention was attracted by the sounds which reached them from the hall, where a violent tumult prevailed, occasioned by the arrival of a fresh party. In the pauses of their clamor they distinguished the clashing of arms. Though unable to conjecture the cause of this new

alarm, their danger was evidently increased.

In this emergency, when the delay of a moment might be fatal, the fortitude of Jacqueline prevented her sinking under the accumulated terrors which surrounded her. Arthur with her assistance raised the baron, who, with feeble steps, supported by his daughter and Arthur, quitted the room, and proceeded along the corridor.

After being frequently compelled by his weakness to stop, they, accompanied by Blanche, reached the extremity which communicated with the garden. The fresh air imparted a new vigor to the baron. It was still too early for the dawn; and unperceived they left the castle by a private door, and after much time, and with consi-

derable difficulty succeeded in gaining a small recess in the cliff. The impracticability of removing the baron further obliged them to remain in this place, while Arthur hastened forward to procure a vessel to transport them to Guienne.

Exhausted by his recent exertions, the baron reclined on the ground, his head supported by Jacqueline, and almost relapsed into insensibility. The soothing attention of Blanche, who deeply sympathised with the filial sorrow of Jacqueline, was the only circumstance that lightened the heavy oppression of this tedious night. Sometimes bending over her father, Jacqueline listened to his faint respiration, which in the obscurity that surrounded them was the only testimonial to assure her that he still existed. Often she started as the gusts of wind, sweeping

over the sea, howled mournfully among the breaks and hollows of the cliffs, and seemed to her as the distant voices and steps of their pursuers.

CHAPTER XIV.

Look in his glommed face, his sprights there scanne;
How woe-begone, how withered, forwynd, deade!
Haste to thie church glebehouse ashrewed manne!
Haste to thie kiste, thie only dortouse deade.

CHATTERTON.

THE dawn had commenced before the return of Arthur, but the anxious impatience of Jacqueline was at length removed by his appearance. He was accompanied by two sailors. With their assistance the baron was easily conveyed to the vessel that waited for them at the beach. The thick mists of early morning prevented any apprehension of their being observed from the castle.

The assurances of Arthur respecting the baron's health were verified. The symptoms which had occasioned to Jacqueline so much alarm were greatly relieved by rest; and the skilful attendance of Arthur averted any dangerous consequences from the numerous wounds of the baron. Jacqueline attended her father with the most assiduous care; with filial tenderness softening the hours of debility and pain, and under an apparent composure concealing the distressing emotions which the altered appearance and emaciated state of this beloved parent excited.

The weakness of the baron rendered him unable to inquire respecting the mysterious absence and return of Jacqueline; nor had he once asked the cause or object of their removal. In passive silence he left every thing to be arranged by his daughter, whose unre-

mitting attention had principally contributed to preserve his life.

The amiable character and uniform kindness of Jacqueline had attached Blanche, whose disposition was affectionate and susceptible of the most sincere friendship. She shared in all the fatigues which Jacqueline's constant attendance on the baron necessarily occasioned, and seised with avidity every opportunity of alleviating the anxiety that preyed on her spirits. While engaged in these benevolent offices Blanche forgot her own sorrows, forgot the cruel destiny which had twice compelled her to quit her native shores.

During the voyage Jacqueline had learned from Arthur that the attack on Fitzbaynham castle had been conducted by Earl Godemar. The vindictive temper of this nobleman, deeply irri-

tated by Jacqueline's rejection of his offer, and further provoked by the cold contemptuous behaviour of the marquis, eagerly sought for revenge. In the period of their greatest intimacy the marquis had incautiously mentioned the secret entrance to his father's castle. The earl, availing himself of this intelligence, at the head of a band of desperadoes of whom he was the patron, entered the fortress with the intent of carrying off Jacqueline.

Though totally unprepared for a hostile attempt, the baron and his garrison made a vigorous defence, till overpowered by numbers they were compelled to yield; but not till the earl had received a dangerous wound which rendered him unable to prosecute his search after Jacqueline. Inflamed by pain and disappointment, he caused Father Osborne, together with the few inhabi-

tants who survived, to be confined in his fortress; hoping that the desire of liberty would induce some to reveal the place of Jacqueline's retreat.

After a prosperous passage, during which the baron's health continued to amend, they reached Bourdeaux; and the next morning they commenced their route towards the baron's château, which was situated inland nearly a day's journey from that town. The traveling was rendered as commodious and little fatiguing to the baron as possible. For this purpose, by the orders of Jacqueline, they proceeded at a slow pace; and the sun was beginning to decline as theyapproached the extensive forest in which, near the opposite extremity, stood the mansion belonging to the baron.

Arthur, who had been in the service of

the baron at the time of his residence at the château, imagining that he should perfectly recollect the road, had undertaken to guide them. Hitherto he had found little difficulty, many local objects being deeply inpressed on his memory. At the entrance of the forest, the road divided. Arthur remembered that formerly there had been but one path, and hesitated which to pursue.

No object that could assist his determination was within sight. He looked back on the open country, which they had passed, in the hopes that some tower, or the spire of a distant abbey, would remove his uncertainty; but the approach of evening had contracted the landscape within very narrow bounds. Mists and lurid clouds formed an impenetrable obscurity. Thus compelled to trust to chance, he entered

that which was widest and appeared most frequented.

They had not advanced far before the thick foliage of the trees anticipated night, and obliged them to slacken their already slow pace. As they proceeded the road became narrower, the under branches of the trees brushed the sides of the carriage, and almost impeded their way; while the wind, rushing impetuously between them, formed an awfully mysterious concert; and their tufted heads, bowed by it's fury, seemed in hoarse murmers and hollow whistlings to implore the pity of it's restless power.

The darkness momentarily increased, as they found themselves inclosed within the forest. No opening on either side appeared. The branches and underwood thickly interwoven obliged

them to continue their progress through this winding and difficult path.

Arthur was soon convinced that he had mistaken the road; but he continued to advance, expecting that they should quickly emerge into some more open spot, where he might be enabled to ascertain the proper direction. He was the more eager to hasten forward, as he recollected that this forest had formerly been much infested by banditti, who frequently perpetrated within it's gloomy mazes the most shocking outrages. This circumstance, however, he had carefully concealed from Jacqueline, who, relying on his assurance of being well acquainted with the road, felt anxious to terminate their journey only on the baron's account.

He had for some time enjoyed a profound repose, and fearful of disturbing

him, Jacqueline and Blanche had ceased to converse, when the carriage suddenly stopped, and they heard the drivers calling to Arthur, who was a little before. He immediately returned, and a conversation in a low tone ensued.

Jacqueline was about to inquire the reason of this halt. Advancing her head to the window for this purpose, she distinguished the tread of many horses moving at a quick pace and at no great distance. While she hesitated whether to speak, the sounds evidently became fainter, and were soon entirely lost.

From a few sentences that reached her of the conference which still continued between Arthur and the drivers, she discovered the disagreeable dilemma in which they were placed, and also the

apprehensions of Arthur, who suspected that these horsemen were a party of banditti. Though alarmed by the danger to which they were exposed, benighted amid the intricacies of this immense forest, she prudently resolved not to mention this circumstance to Blanche, who had expressed uneasiness at the approach of evening.

The carriage again moved forward. As they proceeded, remote lights appeared through the trees, sometimes stationary, at others rapidly moving. For a few moments they were lost, then unexpectedly re-appeared in an opposite direction.

These transient and mysterious appearances, for which she was unable to account, far from relieving the spirits of Jacqueline, only rendered the surrounding gloom more oppressive; while the

conjectures of the drivers, who likewise perceived these unusual illuminations, were ill calculated to remove the idea that seised her imagination, of horrid scenes transacting by these unsertain lights, now flushing with a sudden blaze, now sunk in darkness.

Having reached an opening in which several vistas terminated, Arthur found his perplexity renewed. He knew not which to pursue; but reflecting that delay would probably only increase their danger, he led the way to one which, being wider than the one they had quitted, admitted imperfectly the rays of the moon.

They had not advanced far down the avenue, when Jacqueline thought she discerned at a short distance before them something moving among the trees. Arthur and the drivers perceiv-

ed it at the same moment; but all so indistinctly in the dusky obscurity which surrounded them, that none could be certain what it was. The man concluded it to be a beast of prey, watching their motions, and lying in wait for them. Roused by the danger to which they thought themselves exposed, and irritated with Arthur, to whose ignorance of the road they attributed their unpleasant situation, they no longer suppressed their vexation, but after severely upbraiding him, refused to proceed.

The clamorous dialogue which ensued awoke the baron; and calling to Arthur, he inquired the cause. The noise of the disputants prevented the baron's voice from being heard; and Jacqueline, anxious to spare her father the uneasiness which the knowlege of the fact would occasion, had with some

difficulty prevailed on him to compose himself, when his attention was renewed by the words of Arthur; who, after assuring the alarmed drivers that they had nothing to apprehend from this appearance which had so much terrified them, declared that it concerned the baron alone, and vehemently pressed them to proceed, affirming that to his certain knowlege they were not far from the château.

At this speech the baron eagerly inquired in what place they were. When informed, he started, clasped his hands, and, uttering an incoherent exclamation, remained gazing around him for several minutes in silence. Then speaking to himself, he said, counting the trees, "One, two, three — the eighth. Do my eyes deceive me? It is the very scene."

"Of murder," replied a deep hollow voice.

The surprise of Jacqueline and Blanche is indescribable. The latter, uttering a faint cry, sunk back almost motionless; but Jacqueline felt herself too much interested to yield to terror. The words and agitation of her father forcibly recalled that never-to-be-forgotten day when she first learned that he had forfeited his innocence.

Grasping her arm with convulsive violence, the baron exclaimed in a horrid manner, "Do you behold him? See! he leans against the tree. Let me not view him, lest I falter in my purpose." After a pause he continued, "Leave me, I will alone encounter him.--That blow was mortal. Did you mark how he implored me to hear him?

. Is that Eloise? Take her away. Let her not see this blood. Unhappy Eloise!"

Here the frantic rapidity with which he had spoken deprived the baron of breath, and compelled him to stop. In the pause that ensued, a long agonising groan resounded from the adjoining thicket. The drivers crossed themselves; and Arthur, uttering a pious ejaculation, besought them to move, but in vain. Their superstitious fears, raised to the highest pitch, had rooted them to the spot; and they remained immoveable, their eyes and mouths extended in the dreadful expectation of beholding some horrible object.

The baron again spoke. "That groan surely was his last. No, life still lingers. Albert, friend, revive. How pale! And I have reduced him to this! I, who but an hour ago would have

died to save him! He may yet be saved. Fly, Sebastian, for aid. Do not shun me Eloise. Do not call me murderer." Here the baron's emotions became too violent for his weak state, and reclining on the shoulders of his daughter, his senses fled.

During the ravings of the baron, his gestures, and the disorder of his countenance, on which the moon shone, testified that the powerful recollection of some dark and terrible occurrence had dislodged his reason.

What were the sensations of Jacqueline, on finding her worst fears realised! The baron had accused himself of a crime horrible and revolting to human nature. With shuddering terror she listened for the answer of the unknown, who had replied to the baron's exclamations; but in vain. The si-

lence remained unbroken. That awful voice was heard no more. Though her belief in supernatural beings was not great, she scarcely doubted that these words had a more than mortal origin.

Arthur, to whom the transaction which so strongly affected the baron was partly known, fervently besought his patron saint to avert from the innocent the punishment due only to guilt; while Blanche, astonished, alarmed, and unable to afford the consolation of which she was utterly destitute, in silence deplored her unfortunate fate, that continually exposed her to fresh dangers.

Jacqueline was recalled from the agonising possibilities which tortured her fancy, by the return of Arthur who had ridden forward. He brought the

pleasing intelligence that they were not more than half a mile from the château.

With some difficulty the drivers were prevailed on to proceed; and in a short time, without any further interruption, they reached this long deserted mansion.

The loud blast which Arthur sounded on the horn that hung at the gate, quickly brought some of the domestics. The doors were unclosed, and they entered the path that led to the front of the building.

The unexpected and unannounced return of the baron, after an absence of so many years, excited the greatest surprise; and this emotion was further heightened on beholding him insensible.

The anxiety of Jacqueline did not prevent her observing the strange and significant looks that passed among the domestics, many of whom had lived in the service of the baron during his former residence at the château. Among this number was Agnes the housekeeper. Some incoherent sentences, which in her astonishment at the baron's arrival, she had unintentionally uttered, particularly arrested the attention of Jacqueline.

Agnes, perceiving the notice which her conduct had occasioned, was evidently confused, and, to avoid the inquiring eyes of Jacqueline, she eagerly busied herself in assisting to recover the baron.

Amid the convulsive starts which preceded the restoration of his reason, the baron more than once repeated the names of Sebastian and Eloise. Other

words he strove to pronounce, but in a tone so low and indistinct that their import was unintelligible.

On hearing these exclamations, Agnes shook her head; at the same time saying, in a kind of whisper, " Poor soul! How deep must be his grief! So many years have not obliterated the the remembrance of that dismal day."

" What day?" inquired Jacqueline, amazed by this speech, in a tone of mingled indignation and curiosity.

" O my lady," replied Agnes, " is it possible you can forget that sad that horrible act which drove my lord from this till then beloved retreat?"

She was proceeding, when Arthur, who had been absent during the former part of the conversation, re-entered

the room. Hastily interrupting Agnes, he threw on her a glance which imposed silence. Then turning to Jacqueline, who leaned, pale and trembling, on the arm of Blanche, he besought her to compose herself. In the present state of her mind this was impossible. Longer suspense was not to be endured, and she demanded an immediate explanation of the circumstance to which Agnes had alluded.

With visible reluctance and concern, Arthur, after some hesitation, answered, "Alas! my lady, the transactions of that dreadful hour are unknown. Heaven alone was witness to them. Twenty years have passed since that period, and the veil of mystery which first shrouded them has never been removed. It is a subject my lord has often charged me never to mention;

an order which the incaution of Agnes has now led me for the first time to transgress."

The respect which Jacqueline had been accustomed to pay to all her father's commands, did not permit her to question Arthur further. What he had said only stimulated her curiosity, and increased the surprise which she experienced on finding herself a stranger to actions of her family with which even the menials of the household were acquainted.

The utmost efforts to restore the baron were for a long time ineffectual. At length he regained his faculties; but the extreme agitation which he had so lately suffered was succeeded by a most alarming weakness. In silence he surveyed the-well known ob-

jects of the apartment to which he had been carried. This scrutiny finished, he sighed deeply and closed his eyes.

The château had once been the favorite residence of the baron. Here in elegant retirement he spent the first three or four years after his marriage; the baroness, whose taste concurred with his, preferring the mild pleasures of this charming retreat to the more splendid though less happy scenes which their rank and fortune placed within their reach. Here had passed the most delightful period of his existence. Surrounded by his family, loving and beloved, he looked forward to years of felicity which should end only with his life. Deceitful hope! Here on this spot which promised lasting bliss had perished every joy. Here had been accomplished that dark mysterious deed which resigned his soul to endless

despair; which drove him, guilty and wretched, like a second Adam from his paradise.

Two and twenty years had elapsed since that period; but the image of his crime was still green in his memory. His innocence and peace had together quitted him.

For some hours Jacqueline continued to watch beside him; till the baron, having sunk into a quiet slumber, she yielded to the repeated solicitations of Blanche, and leaving Arthur to remain with him, she retired to the apartment prepared for her.

CHAPTER XV.

What squalid spectres in the dead of night
Break my short sleep, and skim before my sight?

DRYDEN.

THE spacious apartment to which Jacqueline had been conducted was furnished in the Spanish style. The curtains and bed-hangings were of light green silk, and between the windows on gilt frames were placed vases of various elegant figures which had formerly contained flowers and fragrant shrubs.

This room opened into a small oratory from which it was divided by a

grating of gold wire, covered by a curtain of a similar color to the rest. The imposing yet pleasing grandeur of this place, admirably adapted for the sacred purposes to which it was consecrated, inviting more particular observation, Jacqueline unclosed the door in the centre of the grating and entered.

Both the oratory and the chamber had evidently been long disused; but though this circumstance detracted from the brilliancy of their appearance, Jacqueline remained for a few moments admiring the taste and fancy displayed in the choice and arrangement of the ornaments.

On the right were two windows constructed in the form of folding-doors, extending from the ceiling to the floor, and opening on a balcony which at the other extremity communicated with

the garden by a flight of marble steps. Near one of the windows stood a beautiful embroidered stool, with a harp before it, as if some person had been lately playing; and beside them, on a table, lay a music book, which, with some surprise, Jacqueline perceived was unfolded at the Spanish ballad which had always been the peculiar favorite of her mother. Opposite to the entrance, on a silver altar, was a crucifix of excellent workmanship. The glory, composed of precious stones, set transparent, diffused a dazzling lustre, and imparted to it something of a supernatural character. On each side was a figure in alabaster, representing Faith and Hope, one hand supporting the altar, the other bearing a golden candlestick. The back of the recess was filled by a highly-finished painting of the Ascension.

This spot, encircled by a screen si-

milar to that which separated the apartments, was approached by two steps. On one of them lay a missal, which attracted the notice of Jacqueline by the uncommon elegance of the cover, composed of crimson satin, richly worked with gold. In the centre, within a circle of laurel leaves, was inscribed the name of Eloise. Jacqueline started, and hastily replacing the book, returned to the chamber.

Who was Eloise? Strange that she had never heard the name, never been informed that such a person was connected with her family. A silence, which she had sometimes thought extraordinary, had always been preserved respecting the château; or when, by chance, any allusion had been made to it, she had observed a gloom overspread the countenances of her parents. Though her curiosity was interested by

this conduct, delicacy had prevented her making inquiries on a subject evidently unpleasant. Thus she was totally unacquainted with all the circumstances of that period.

As Jacqueline had directed that she should be informed as soon as the baron awoke, she did not undress, but threw herself on the couch, ready to arise at the first summons.

For some time she courted sleep in vain, for her mind was too much agitated and perplexed to enjoy it's influence. She looked back with wonder and regret on the changes which a few months had wrought. Then, surrounded by affection, her hours had passed in tranquil happiness. First in the group which filled this blissful season stood the baroness, that beloved parent whose loss she had never ceased to de-

plore, whose maternal tenderness was often in secret remembered with tears.

The recollections suggested by this review were distressing; but on reverting to the incidents of the evening, she became sensible of more poignant anguish. They had extinguished the last hope of her father's innocence, and he whom from infancy she had regarded as the mirror of honor, now appeared lustreless and stained with blood. In mingled despair and horror, she turned from the sad contrast, and sought by other reflexions to assuage the misery which these images inflicted.

In the dreary vacuity of wretchedness she looked around for some source of comfort. To Asia, to her far distant brother, she turned for consolation. Affectionate and judicious, his presence and advice at this moment would

have been inestimable. Her spirits, which the remembrance of Sir Edmund's virtues had partly revived, sunk as she considered the interval which must elapse before they could again, if ever, meet.

In solitude and darkness the hours slowly passed: grief and uneasiness banished repose, and visions of impending evils floated before her eyes; when suddenly a voice, in a faint and scarcely audible whisper, pronounced the name of Eloise.

Astonished and terrified, Jacqueline hastily rose from the couch; but so long a silence ensued that she was beginning to think that her alarm was unfounded, when she distinguished steps in the oratory, and shortly after a deep sigh. In the stillness which succeeded, Jacqueline gathered sufficient cou-

rage to advance to the grating, and with a trembling hand she raised a part of the curtain.

One of the windows was now unclosed, and through this opening light enough was admitted for her to discern the objects in the interior of the room; and with extreme surprise she perceived a person kneeling before the altar.

Shocked, dismayed, and oppressed by an emotion nearly allied to horror, Jacqueline remained motionless, gazing on the unknown, who raising his head, clasped his hands, and extending them upwards, said, "Forgive me, Eloise: forgive, and chide not! The hour of vengeance is at hand. The murderer, emboldened by impunity, dares with his presence to pollute this place, once thy dwelling!"

As he uttered these words, the unknown started on his feet. He struck his hand on his forehead, "O, wretch! wretch! where does she now dwell?" Then folding his hands on his bosom, he continued pacing the room in a hurried manner. Frequently he spoke. His sentences were incoherent, his gestures wild. "Eloise, smile on my purpose! It is a project dark and dreadful as thy fate! Revenge is the only solace left me, the only mitigation of my never-dying pangs!"

A black garment was flung on the harp. As the unknown pronounced these words he snatched it off, and in frenzied haste threw it round him. For an instant he sunk on the stool; his hand wandered among the strings; a few sad unconnected notes answered to his touch. "No more! no more!" exclaimed the unknown, as he arose:

"madness and despair are in those tones. Eloise! Eloise! Tremble, Fitzbaynham! I live but for revenge!"

This denunciation against her father overpowered the fortitude of Jacqueline, and tottering to a seat, she sunk on it almost bereft of sense.

Before she could collect her thoughts, the morning dawned. Feverish and faint, she opened a window to inhale the air. How calm and tranquil nature! how wild and ruffled her bosom! Scarcely a breeze moved the foliage, while from behind the adjacent forest the sun rose in unresisted splendor. So bright, so unclouded, had been the morning of her youth. To think connectedly was not in her power. For a moment she doubted the reality of the scene which had just passed: but rea-

son and memory recalled her from this delusion.

Without purpose and hardly conscious of her actions, she advanced to the grating; and drawing aside the cuttain entered the oratory. The window was closed: every thing remained as when she quitted it at the beginning of the night. How ought she to act? Ignorant who Eloise was, and of the circumstances relating to her, Jacqueline thought there might be danger in acquainting the baron with this singular occurrence during his present weakness. Agnes perhaps could inform her on both of these points. To her she resolved to apply; the hazard to which the baron was exposed having removed the scruples which before withheld her inquiries on this forbidden subject.

This determination relieved her mind, harassed by uncertainty; and finding herself fatigued, she returned to the chamber, and sought in a short slumber to forget herself and her cares.

From a disturbed sleep she was roused by a knocking at her chamber door. Supposing her father worse, she sprung from the bed, and hastily undrawing the fastening, demanded in an eager manner how he was.

"My lord still sleeps," replied Agnes, as she entered. "I came to offer my services at your toilet, but am, I see, too late." Then perceiving the paleness of Jacqueline, she said, "You are not well, my lady."

"I shall be better, presently. I am going to speak to you on an important

subject, and expect that you will answer me with freedom and fidelity."

Surprised by this introduction, Agnes remained for a few moments silent, earnestly regarding Jacqueline, who, musing on past incidents, did not perceive the effect of her words. "Are these apartments usually inhabited?"

"Not for many years," replied Agnes, with increased astonishment.

"Probably," resumed Jacqueline, "you can inform me who visited the oratory last night?"

"Oh, holy virgin!" exclaimed Agnes, her eyes for the first time glancing towards that end of the room. "Who removed that curtain? In pity draw it. I cannot bear the sight."

"What sight?"

"That room. Ah! there stands her harp. I almost fancy I see her sitting before it. Poor lady, I cannot think of her even now without tears."

"Of whom are you speaking?"

Agnes, intent on former scenes, did not hear Jacqueline's question; but slowly approaching the grating, her eyes wandered round the apartment. Suddenly recollecting herself, "Pardon me, my lady," said she, turning to Jacqueline; "when on this subject I am apt to forget myself."

"To whom did these apartments belong?" inquired Jacqueline.

"To the lady Eloise. She had them,

fitted up in this style after the Spanish fashion. What delight she took in them once; and afterwards, when she became melancholy, she used to walk half the night in that balcony, singing such mournful airs!"

"Does she still continue that practice?"

"All the blessed saints defend us!" exclaimed Agnes, moving towards the other end of the room. "I believe not. But why did your ladyship ask?"

Jacqueline mentioned the nocturnal visit of the unknown, but without repeating the mysterious words which she had uttered.

During this relation the countenance of Agnes expressed the utmost horror. "Then you have seen it!" cried she.

" Was it not in sable garments, long and flowing ?"

" Yes," replied Jacqueline, " the dress was dark. I could but imperfectly distinguish it in the dusky light. Who was it ?"

" Ah! my lady," rejoined Agnes, " who could it be but the ghost ?"

" The ghost ?" repeated Jacqueline, in an incredulous tone. " It was no ghost that *I* beheld."

" Indeed, indeed it was," replied Agnes. " Had you seen and heard what I and many of the household have, you would no longer doubt. Ever since that dismal night it has at intervals appeared. Sometimes months, nay even years, have passed without our seeing it ; but it always returned.

Lately it had been absent during an unusual interval, till two nights since Pierre saw it in the garden."

"Did this mysterious being never speak?"

"Frequently. On stormy nights which would have killed any human creature, exposed to their fury it has remained under the trees uttering doleful lamentations. But it's chief station is at the banqueting-room on the canal. If your ladyship will step to this window, I will show it to you. There, to the right, among that clustre of trees, you may perceive the white dome. I almost shudder while I look at it."

"Have you often seen it there?"

"What I, my lady? Kingdoms should not tempt me to approach that

building. For twenty years no human being has crossed the threshold. It was a favorite spot with the lady Eloise."

"Who is the lady Eloise?" inquired Jacqueline.

This question evidently confused Agnes. She regarded Jacqueline with surprise and curiosity, "Of what imprudence have I been guilty? Alas! it is a subject on which I ought not to have spoken."

The entrance of Blanche at this moment terminated the conversation; and scarcely were the morning salutations exchanged before a domestic announced that the baron was awake and had inquired for Jacqueline.

Hastening to the baron's apartment,

she found him better than she had dared to hope. His senses were perfectly restored; he was composed; but an extreme lassitude still remained. For a moment on the approach of Jacqueline a faint animation appeared on his countenance, but in his manner there was a solemnity which she had never before observed. To the scene of the preceding evening he made no allusion, and Jacqueline carefully avoided touching on that topic.

During the greater part of the day she watched beside his couch, with all the solicitude of filial affection. Her tender attentions seemed soothing to the baron. Sometimes his eyes were directed towards her with a mingled expression of pity and anguish; at others they wandered round the room, now resting on one object, now on another. These reviews, far

from imparting comfort, evidently increased the gloom which oppressed him. Frequently he uttered incoherent sentences, and leaving them unfinished often began a new subject, which he quitted in an equally abrupt manner. His thoughts, as it were, passed in words; he gave sounds to the ideas which rushed in an undisciplined crowd on his mind, involved in all the obscurity that a lapse of many years throws on the most familiar actions, when suddenly recalled by some unexpected circumstance.

Taking an opportunity when his attendants were withdrawn, he thus addressed his daughter. "The time is arrived when it is necessary to inform you of the mystery and disgrace which involve our house. Educated in happy ignorance, I once hoped that the horrid tale would never reach your ears;

but brought by a strange concatenation of events to this place, longer concealment is impossible." With a sigh the baron continued, "Jacqueline, when you have heard the recital, do not hate me. My crime, though great, was not committed in the pursuit of unworthy passions. A misguided principle of honor plunged me into guilt."

The baron paused, but Jacqueline did not reply. Her agitation, her grief, her horrible apprehensions, a conflict of emotions in which compassion for her father predominated, deprived her of words, but revealed themselves with shocking eloquence in her countenance and attitude.

The baron perceived what passed in her mind. "You pity me, Jacqueline," he exclaimed. "All my children have not done so." The recol-

lections excited by this sentence, the spectacle of his daughter's emotion, the scene which he was to relate, and his feeble health, shaken by disease and recent agitation, overpowered him.

"It is impossible," said he. "I cannot utter it. But I conjure you, Jacqueline, deprive me not of my sole remaining comfort. When! you know the measure of my guilt, you may find it less than suspicion anticipates, and not wholly without circumstances of extenuation. Remember that my bosom was once as unsullied as your own: and do not exaggerate in imagination your father's crimes. I feel all that you suffer by suspense, but I cannot now end it. Spare me at present, and I will shortly reveal to you this the most painful recollection of my life, and hope from your affection and in-

dulgence all which justice might urge you to deny."

Jacqueline, as soon as the agony of her feelings permitted utterance, assured the baron, in the most affectionate terms, of her unalterable attachment. Ignorant of the cause of his distress, she knew not how to administer consolation; but the tenderness with which she endeavoured to mitigate his sorrows was not without effect. She hesitated whether to mention the visit of the unknown in the oratory; but dreading the consequences of this communication, should the mysterious person be connected with the transaction which so powerfully affected the baron, her apprehensions triumphed, and she resolved to pass at least one night more before she disclosed this singular occurrence.

Towards evening the baron having sunk into a slumber, Jacqueline, faint and oppressed by painful emotions, among which the anticipation of the baron's promised disclosure was not the least distressing, descended to the garden. It was the close of a bright summer day. The sun, but just above the horizon, diffused a mellow lustre on the surrounding scene, and gliding with it's last rays the summit of the lofty Pyrenées, partly revealed their outlines fading in distance.

The château was situated on a gentle eminence. Unlike the fabrics usual in that age, which were constructed chiefly for defence, the architecture was light and elegant, adapted to the mildness of the climate.

To the spot on which it stood na-

ture had been bountiful; and art had assisted to accomplish her designs. The grounds, disposed with admirable taste, sloped towards the neighbouring forest, from which they were separated by a canal, whose clear surface gave a second existence to the surrounding scene. On the margin were numerous seats, some close to the edge, some inclosed by trees and odoriferous shrubs; where the gentle murmur of the stream, heard though concealed from view, invited to repose. Others more elevated commanded the vistas which in different directions pierced the recesses of the forest. On every side the eye wandered with delight, the beautiful and sublime, happily mingled, formed an unrivaled *coup-d'œil.*

"Alas!" exclaimed Jacqueline as she gazed, "dreadful surely must have

been the calamity which drove my parents from this place!" The reverie which this reflection introduced was interrupted by the approach of Blanche. For a short time the two friends were engaged in admiring the prospects which at every turning opened to their view. Blanche appeared thoughtful and embarrassed. At length, after a pause in the conversation, she said, "Will you allow me to employ this evening which presents the first opportunity for relating the events of my past life?

"I am aware that they are unworthy your attention, but till the doubtful situations in which I have unhappily been placed are explained, I feel humiliated by the conviction that I am indebted for your protection to pity rather than esteem. If after you have heard my story, you feel inclined to

continue your friendship, I shall receive it as the most valued gift in the power of fortune to bestow."

"Our short acquaintance," replied Jacqueline, "has revealed enough of your character to convince me that misfortune and injustice compelled you to seek a refuge with me. You must forgive me, if, while I experience the pleasure of your society, I feel little inclination to regret the cause which introduced me to your friendship."

For a few moments Blanche paused, and then speaking with hesitation, "After the kind sentiments which you have expressed towards me," said she, "it is with extreme reluctance that I entreat your further indulgence. Pardon me if in the course of my narrative some persons connected with your family by blood and marriage appear less

amiable than you have hitherto considered them. Justice to myself compels me to disclose events which I lament it has fallen to my fortune to explain."

Jacqueline, amazed and terrified, remained silent. That these events related to the mystery which enveloped the baron she did not doubt.

"I perceive that I have offended you," said Blanche.

"Your words," replied Jacqueline, "have, I confess, astonished me, and greatly raised my curiosity. I know that you will speak with candor, and I conjure you not to let the apprehension of distressing me persuade you to soften or omit whatever it is necessary for me to hear."

"Alas!" rejoined Blanche, "I regret that this subject was introduced; for what I have to relate will only add to your uneasiness."

"Suspense is to me more tormenting than the worst certainty. I entreat you to terminate so painful a situation."

As Jacqueline concluded this speech, they entered an alcove; and in a few minutes, Blanche commenced her narrative.

CHAPTER XVI.

On hasty wings thy youth is flown:
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone.

GRAY

"I AM a native of England, and of noble descent. In the civil commotions, which about six years since desolated that country, my father, Lord Henry Gerald, took a conspicuous part. It was at this period that my griefs begun. Educated in my father's castle with the utmost tenderness, an only child, and considered by all who approached me as likely, from my birth and fortune, to fill an exalted rank, I had nearly completed my twelfth year,

unacquainted with sorrow but by name, sporting in the sunshine of prosperity, unconscious of the impending tempest.

"My father, on the commencement of the civil war, resolved at the head of his vassals to join that party which he considered most worthy of success. Both factions had courted his support; but uninfluenced by interest, his principle unhappily led him to espouse the weaker side. Full of the gay visions of youth, I beheld the preparations for his departure, and regretted only that my sex prevented me from sharing with him the glories of the field.

"The alacrity with which my father's orders were executed by his retainers, the noble valor which sparkled in their countenances, the martial pomp of their

assembling, but, above all, the animating strains of the minstrels, supported my spirits at the moment of separation, while with parental fondness he clasped me to his bosom and pronounced a last adieu. Alas! it was indeed a last farewell. I beheld him no more.

"The misfortunes of our family are probably not unknown to you. Allow me therefore to hasten over the sad scenes which immediately follow.

"Only a few days had elapsed before a rumor reached us of a battle. Our feelings during the interval, till more certain intelligence confirmed our worst fears, may be more easily imagined than described. At length a messenger arrived with the heavy tidings that my father, covered with wounds, had been made prisoner. His enemies, elated by victory, with the

vindictive rage which generally disgraces civil wars, after a summary trial pronounced him a traitor, degraded him from his title, and confiscated his property. The ignominious part of the sentence never took place: his execution was deferred till the succeeding morning; but his wounds, for some hours neglected for wanton cruelty, produced a mortification, and during the night death released him from further sufferings.

"You may conceive the affliction of my mother and myself; which yet was to receive addition. A considerable detachment had been immediately dispatched to take possession of our castle, and were then not more that half a day's march distant. Excess of terror lest I should fall into the power of our enemies, recalled my mother from the lethargy of grief. Little could be hoped

from resistance, unprepared for a siege, and without a leader. Flight seemed the only possible method of eluding their fury, but so many were the difficulties and dangers which opposed the attempt, that nothing less than despair, joined to her extreme affection for me, would have urged my mother to encounter them. By the advice of her confessor, who in this distress generously resolved not to abandon us, but at the hazard of his own safety endeavour at least to preserve our lives, our departure was deferred till night. In the mean time our attention was carefully concealed from all except the principal officer, who, the better to favor our escape, promised to delay the surrender of the castle as long as possible.

"During that memorable day how distressful were my feelings. In those mournful hours was exacted the long

arrear I owed to misery. I flew from room to room; each was endeared by some fond remembrance; I was about to quit them all, to return no more. I gazed around with that oppressive sensation which the last view of well-known and not indifferent objects always inspires.

"At length gloomy and dreary as our prospects the evening closed. Never shall I forget the horrors it revealed. On many of the distant hills large fires were blazing, while in the vallies the fainter flames which rose from cottages and scattered buildings, marked the progress of the victorious enemy. I beheld and shuddered.

"As soon as it was completely dark, the friar repaired to my mother's apartment, and reminded her that delay would only increase our danger. Her

resolution once taken, she did not hesitate, but immediately followed him to the postern where our horses waited. A few jewels, the gift of her own family, she had concealed in her garments; and thus slenderly provided we commenced our journey, accompanied, by the friar, whom no persuasions could induce to forsake us.

"We had not proceeded far before we were obliged to quit the road, to avoid meeting the troops whom we could distinctly hear approaching. It was the advanced guard of the party detached against our castle. As soon as they had passed we regained the road, and pursued our way at as quick a pace as the darkness would permit. Hitherto our dangers had been few, but as we drew nearer to populous places, our situation became more perilous. At one time we were compelled to

plunge into a thicket; for as two parties were coming towards us in opposite directions, we could neither advance nor retreat.

"While the trees concealed us, we heard them challenge each other. In the voice of one of the commanders I recognized that of a knight lately a guest at our castle. Overjoyed at this discovery, I pronounced his name, exclaiming 'now we shall be safe.' The friar instantly seising my arm enjoined silence. I knew not of the imprudence of which I had been guilty, for I had not then learned that political differences sever the closest friendships. This man, so lately my father's companion, had presided at his trial, and joined his voice in the unjust sentence. Fortunately the noise and rapidity of their motions prevented my words

from being heard: but we escaped this danger only to meet another.

"We shortly fell in with a body who seemed disposed to question us rigorously. Hopeless of eluding their numerous inquiries, and being already within half a mile of the place to which we had directed our course, the friar made signs to us to endeavour to reach it; for concealed by the darkness, we had not yet been perceived. We felt great reluctance to leave him exposed to a danger which he had incurred on our account, but there was no alternative.

"My mother, imagining that I could not be safe in any part of England, had resolved to take refuge with the Marquis Omfredo, to whom she was distantly related. In pursuance of this

plan, our journey had been directed towards the nearest post; where, shortly after quitting the friar, we arrived without further molestation. With anxious impatience we passed the following day, in the expectation of the friar's joining us, but in vain: he did not appear. Our situation was too full of danger to admit of longer delay; and having with some difficulty procured a vessel, we were obliged to sail without being able to gain any information respecting his fate.

"After a prosperous voyage we arrived in Italy; and having rested for a few days, begun our journey to the residence of the Marquis Omfredo, which we reached without the occurrence of any circumstance worth relating. From the marquis we experienced the affectionate reception which his characteristic benevolence, and the relation between the families, had encou-

raged us to expect. But my sorrows were not yet to know an end.

"My mother's health declined. The loss of my father, to whom she was tenderly attached, joined to the fatigue and extreme anxiety which she had suffered, undermined her constitution; a decline ensued, which in a few months terminated her existence. With her last breath she besought the marquis to continue his protection to me. He promised never to desert me, and by his kind assurances soothed her dying moments, and he seemed the anguish which she felt at leaving me an orphan in a foreign country, and almost dependent on the bounty of a family to whom I was scarcely known.

"I will not attempt to describe the grief which on this event seised me. For a long time I was incapable of con-

solation. So deep was the impression made on me by such a series of calamities that a settled melancholy succeeded to my former gaiety. The marquis sympathised with my grief, and by various means strove to alleviate it. He did not, like many, offer consolation on a subject when he felt it must be unavailing. He joined in my distress, and admitted that I had just cause for my excessive sorrow. He often dwelt on the amiable virtues of my parents, he retraced their lives, and by this delicate attention preserved me from the afflicting silence often maintained on such occasions, when the object in whom all our fondest hopes centered suddenly ceases to be mentioned. He reminded me of their wishes for my happiness, and conjured me to endeavour to fulfil them. Not to appear insensible to his kindness, I tried at least to seem resigned, and by degrees joined

in the festivities to which he introduced me.

"His villa, situated only a few miles from Naples, was the resort of all distinguished either by rank or talents. His daughter, Lady Ellena, the present marchioness, had just completed her eighteenth year. Glowing in youth and unrivaled beauty, the heiress of his title and great possessions, her hand was assiduously sought by the most illustrious cavaliers, but in vain. No one was able to inspire her with a mutual passion and the most splendid offers were declined without hesitation.

"It was with surprize and regret that the marquis saw her persevere in this conduct. But his wishes, frequently expressed, were disregarded. She seemed to consider no one worthy of her favor; for while she was pleased with their at-

tentions, and gratified by the number and high rank of the suitors who composed her train, her haughty demeanour forbade hope.

"About this time Count Cajetan returned from a town through the north of Italy. He was the son of a particular friend of the marquis, and distantly related to his family. Some unavoidable misfortunes, joined to a passion for deep play, had greatly deranged his father's affairs; and at his death, his son, the heir of his title, found himself destitute of fortune in any degree adequate to support him in a manner becoming his rank. The hardships and humiliations which would have attended his entrance into the world under such disadvantageous circumstances, were removed by the generous friendship of the marquis, who received the young count into his mansion, bestowed on him an education

suited to his birth, and by his liberality and kindness strove to make him forget his dependence.

"Candid and unsuspicious, the marquis never attributed the actions of others to sinister motives: the verbose thanks of the count, therefore, his ostentatious zeal in the performance of trifling services, the unwearied attention with which he listened when the marquis spoke, and the uniform concurrence of his opinions with those of his patron, the marquis regarded as the offspring of gratitude felt with juvenile warmth; and in fond anticipations he looked forward to his mature years for the realization of the hopes of his youth.

"The understanding of the count was above mediocrity. He received instruction with avidity, and the ample

means of improvement which the munificence of the marquis afforded him were not neglected. Rich in all that education could bestow, he yet was destitute of an amiable character. Selfish, designing, and avaricious, he early learned to conceal those odious habits. A perfect master in deceit, his words, generally at variance with his thoughts, were uttered with an appearance of candor which banished suspicion.

" He had long formed the project of obtaining the hand of Lady Ellena, and the rich succession of the marquis. He was well aware of the numerous obstacles which opposed his attempts, and of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of overcoming them ; but they were not sufficient to deter him. Among these, the excessive pride of Lady Ellena was not the least formidable, but he studied her character with so much success,

and knew so well how to profit by the opportunities which his situation afforded of being in her company, that without once in the remotest manner having hinted his presumptuous hopes, he was able to secure her affection. Unconscious to herself, he became the object of her tenderest regard. No circumstance occurred to awake her vanity, or suggest the humiliations which this new passion must involve, till it had acquired strength too great to be subdued. The prudence with which he conducted himself by leaving her ignorant of his sentiments towards her, continually engaged her attention to discover them; and thus incessantly occupied by his image, and reflections on his words and actions, the influence which he had already gained insensibly increased.

The count, dreading lest the marquis should penetrate his designs, or discover

the partiality of Lady Ellena, was no sooner convinced that his artifices had succeeded, and that her heart was irrevocably his, than he resolved on a short absence; assured from his knowlege of her disposition that this step would strengthen the sentiments which she experienced in his favor.

Many circumstances concurred to assist the count's plans. Lady Ellena had lost her mother in early infancy; and the marquis, long inconsoleable, seemed to exist only for his daughter's sake. In her centred his fondest hopes, and he declared his fixed resolution never to marry again. Lady Ellena's temper was haughty and violent, her passions were ardent. A timely and judicious restraint would probably have corrected these unamiable traits, but indulgence had increased their power; and unaccustomed to control

her wishes, she became the slave of every new caprice. She was not destitute of penetration to discover the character of others, or of art to conceal her own. Soon conscious of her influence over the marquis, and of it's importance, she endeavoured, and with success, to display before him all these attractive qualities which conciliate affection and esteem. Ignorant of the duplicity which guided her actions, the marquis believed her to be what to him she always appeared, simple, innocent, and ingenuous, and his love for her was unbounded.

"The lady to whom the principal direction of her education had been committed, and who still remained with her in quality of companion and humble friend, had ill fulfilled the duties of her important station. She was the widow of an officer of considerable

rank, who unhappily lost his life before he had attained independence, and left his wife exposed to all the miseries of poverty, rendered still more distressing by the contrast of former affluence. In this exigency she had been recommended to the marquis as eminently qualified to become the governess of his daughter. Highly skilled in ornamental accomplishments, elegant in manners, and accustomed not only to mingle, but to shine in the most polished society, she soon imparted to Lady Ellena those nameless graces, the difficult perfections of politeness.

"The same success did not attend her instructions when she attempted to correct the evil habits which indulgence had fostered. Soon acquainted with the violent and ungovernable temper of her pupil, she ceased to admonish, aware that further opposition

would only render her odious. Yielding to the dictates of interest, Signora Bruna joined the crowd of flatterers whom the rank and fortune of Lady Ellena had attracted. Here her talents had free scope: she shortly excelled every competitor, and became the chosen friend and confidante of Lady Ellena.

" Notwithstanding the extreme caution with which the count conducted himself, his designs were quickly suspected by Signora Bruna; and further observation confirmed her conjecture. The count was not long in perceiving that the signora had penetrated his intentions, and he resolved, since longer concealment was impossible, by candid avowal and liberal promises to secure her assistance. He knew the eagerness with which she sought to regain her former situation in society, and her regret in reviewing the splendid scenes

which she had once adorned. The prospect of again enjoying these long-desired pleasures, would, he conceived, prove too alluring to be rejected. The event justified this opinion. The signora readily entered into his views, and consented to promote them. Sometimes when Lady Ellena commended any of the count's rivals, the signora would join in her approbation, but she was careful to mention soon after, in an apparently accidental manner, some accomplishment in which the count eminently excelled. In short she neglected no opportunity of placing his merits in the most attractive view: and by continually reminding Lady Ellena of those graces which she had already found too captivating, contributed in no small degree to augment her affection for the count.

" Long and severe were the strug-

gles which Lady Ellena experienced between her vanity and love. Frequently she resolved to forget the count, but these determinations never lasted. As the count had foreseen, his absence, by depriving her of the numberless attentions which he daily offered, rendered her more sensible of their value, and increased the eagerness with which she anticipated the period of his return.

"At length this long-desired hour arrived. With a delight which she found it impossible wholly to repress, Lady Ellena welcomed him. Had the marquis entertained the slightest suspicion of what was passing in her mind, the more than usual gaiety of her manner, and the animation which sparkled in her eyes, would doubtless have revealed her partiality for the count, who, with a pleasure better concealed,

though scarcely inferior to hers, beheld the powerful interest which he possessed in her bosom.

"You are perhaps surprised," said Blanche, turning to Jacqueline, that I am so minutely informed of this affair. It was not till long after the period of which I am now speaking that it became known to me, by the dying confessions of Signora Bruna.

"Many days had not relapsed after the arrival of the count, when Lady Ellena, having with some difficulty obtained her father's consent, declared her intention of placing me, for the purpose of completing my education, as a boarder in a convent, not many leagues distant from the villa of the marquis it's patron. The only regret which this determination excited in my mind was occasioned by my re-

luctance to quit the marquis, whose unvaried kindness had impressed me with the deepest gratitude, and for whom I experienced an affection almost filial.

"On the following morning I quitted his hospitable mansion, and, accompanied by Lady Ellena, proceeded to the convent. As I approached it's sacred wall, the tears which hitherto I had with difficulty suppressed could no longer be restrained. There reposed the ashes of my mother. As I gazed on the spires of the chapel which pointed out her last abode, the memory of her maternal tenderness, and the sad fate which had prematurely consigned her to the tomb, returned with the keenness of present suffering. Lady Ellena scarcely noticed my grief, but having consigned me to the care of the abbess, almost immediately departed.

"In this retreat I had passed more than four years; but instead of wearying you by a description of the dull monotony of my existence, I will sketch the outline of the important events which during that period took place in the family of the marquis; events which, though I had no share in them, involved my destiny.

"The agitation and extreme uneasiness visible in Lady Ellena while the count was confined by a slight indisposition, attracted the attention of the marquis, and first excited in his mind some suspicion of the truth. At once he became aware of a danger which had never before occurred to him. The count, whom for many years he had regarded with parental fondness, he highly esteemed; he was anxious to promote his fortune, and place him in a station worthy of his birth: but to

bestow on him his daughter was so revolting to family pride, that he could not think of it without indignation. He had always looked forward with the fullest assurance to the prospect of her forming some splendid alliance. On this point alone he had ever designed to control her wishes.

" In the first transport of surprise and vexation the marquis felt exasperated towards the count; but an attentive observation of his conduct soon dispelled his anger, and deceived by the artful dissimulation of his manners he was induced to believe that on his part at least there existed no cause for alarm. To remove, however, the possibility of so mortifying an event, the marquis proposed to him, under pretence of consulting the count's health, to pass a few months in France. The count, willing to withdraw from a si-

tuation which exposed him to the constant hazard of detection, before a happy opportunity might enable him to complete his plans, acceded to this proposal without hesitation.

"In the signora he possessed an advocate whom interest made faithful, and a correspondence was settled between them. The violence of Lady Ellena's passions, and the influence which the signora still sustained over her, removed the apprehensions which he might otherwise have experienced of being supplanted by a fortunate rival; while his ready compliance with the wishes of the marquis, dissipating his suspicions, preserved the opportunity of prosecuting his attempt.

"To describe the rage, grief, and despair of Lady Ellena at his unexpected departure is impossible. It required all

the art and address of Signora Bruna to prevent her from immediately revealing to the marquis her partiality for the count, and with tears and entreaties, which she believed her father unable to resist, soliciting his recall.

"In the first paroxysm of her affliction she incautiously betrayed to the signora the extent and violence of her attachment. Hitherto vanity and a sense of propriety had made her confine it to her own bosom, and the instant that passion gave place to reason she regretted the words which had escaped, and felt degraded at having avowed such sentiments for one so much her inferior, a dependent on her father's bounty.

"The signora rapidly discerned the shame and remorse of Lady Ellena,

and dextrously contrived to remove these obstacles to the count's success. She enlarged on his noble descent, his accomplishments both personal and mental, and after an artful display of the brilliant circumstances of his character and situation, concluded by declaring that his profound respect for Lady Ellena could be equaled only by the love with which she had inspired him. This important communication seemed to escape her unintentionally; she paused in confusion; but Lady Ellena remained silent. A glance at her countenance, when surprise and joy predominated over indignation, convinced the signora that she had not imprudently ventured this disclosure. The moment was favorable, and she did not fail to improve it to the count's advantage.

" The subject once opened, the prin-

cipal difficulty was overcome. The signora made the count the chief topic in their conversations. In his praises she was inexhaustible, and continually found some new source of commendation on which to fix the attention of Lady Ellena, and some new occasion to excite regret for his absence.

"Lady Ellena listened to these insidious discourses with pleasure. To find her passion approved by one on whose judgement she was accustomed to rely with confidence, contributed in no small degree to increase it. The society of the signora was dearer than ever: to her she could impart the hopes and fears which agitated her bosom; from her hear the delightful assurance that her passion was returned.

"The natural gaiety of Lady Ellena

fled. She became thoughtful, she withdrew from her former amusements, and in solitude indulged and augmented the fatal passion which absorbed her whole soul. The marquis quickly perceived this alteration in his daughter, and his apprehensions were confirmed. He was alarmed for her health, and hoping by change of scene to efface this as he imagined transient impression, he proposed to visit several of the Italian courts.

"This plan dictated by affection did not succeed as the marquis had expected. The melancholy of Lady Ellena not only continued but increased, in spite of the adulation, the pomp, and the splendid festivities with which she was surrounded. The marquis almost despaired of removing an affection so long cherished, when without any ap-

parent cause Lady Ellena suddenly resumed her former habits.

" About this period a letter arrived from the count which both pleased and surprised the marquis. After enumerating in a verbose manner his obligations to the marquis, the count requested his consent to his union with a young lady of rank with whom he had become enamoured during his residence in France. His suit, he mentioned, was accepted, but in consequence of some singular changes in the will of the lady's father, the marriage was unavoidably delayed for a twelvemonth; and the count warmly solicited the marquis's permission to pass at least a part of this tedious interval in his society. As he purposed to settle in France, this, he observed, would probably be the last opportunity he should possess of enjoying that happiness.

" The marquis sincerely rejoiced at the splendid prospect which the proposed alliance opened to the count; he was gratified by his request and the eagerness with which he urged it; and he would without hesitation have expressed to the count the pleasure which his return would afford, had he not dreaded the effect of his presence on Lady Ellena. With the utmost tenderness and delicacy the marquis communicated to her the intended marriage of the count, while with a look of affectionate anxiety he regarded her countenance. Whatever were her emotions, her features did not betray them, and her tranquillity remained undisturbed, while she declared the satisfaction which this intelligence afforded her, and expressed her wishes for the count's happiness.

" The calm indifference of Lady

Ellena, though it removed him from much uneasiness, yet excited astonishment. He began to think his suspicions ill founded, and to ascribe her recent melancholy to some other cause. Emboldened by this supposition, and the uninterested manner in which she conversed on the subject, the marquis ventured to mention the count's request; adding that if this proposal was disagreeable to her, he would readily forego the pleasure of the count's society. With a smile, and in a tone of gaiety Lady Ellena inquired how the marquis could imagine her so cruel as to wish to deprive the count of a happiness which he so highly valued. 'Rather let us,' she continued, 'assist him to pass the tedious interval to which he is condemned.'

"Every apprehension and doubt removed, the marquis returned to the

count as affectionate an answer as the sentiment which dictated it was sincere; and shortly after Lady Ellena and himself returned to Naples to receive their guest, who soon joined them. Had not the count's heart been callous and utterly depraved, the kind friendship which the marquis manifested, the interest which he took in his welfare, and the munificent liberality which he had always shown towards him, must have rendered him incapable of prosecuting the base and treacherous designs which he meditated against his honor and happiness.

"The count had returned to execute a scheme atrocious and infamous, which at every step militated against the peace of his venerable patron, against every principle of justice, and which violated every feeling that dignifies the human character. No re-

morse, no emotion of pity, no sense of duty, checked his career; he proceeded, and was successful. With the signora he had maintained a constant correspondence; between them had been contrived with the concurrence and approbation of Lady Ellena the letter which had imposed on the marquis, and procured the count's return.

"From Lady Ellena he experienced the welcome for which the information of Signora Bruna had prepared him. He perceived with pleasure the influence he possessed over her; but the part which she had acted in assisting to deceive the marquis, joined to interested views, had altered his plans. He no longer felt for her respect; her duplicity prevented confidence, and while he admired her beauty and brilliant accomplishments, he viewed her with a sentiment very different from that

with which he hoped to contemplate his destined wife.

" Lady Ellena's regard for him was as fervent as ever. Little did she imagine what was passing in his mind. His assiduous attentions were renewed, and while in his presence her happiness was complete.

" During his absence the count had spent some time at Venice. The description which he gave of that city raised the curiosity of Lady Ellena; and she expressed, as he had hoped and expected, a wish to see it, more particularly as it was the only place of equal note which on their recent excursion they had not visited. The marquis, who was confined by an attack of a constitutional disorder, regretted that his indisposition prevented him at present from gratifying her desire.

The count, who had studiously excited the expectations of Lady Ellena, in order to render her less willing to suffer disappointment, seised the first opportunity to request permission to attend her and Signora Bruna to Venice. This proposal was highly agreeable to Lady Ellena, who, unaccustomed to control, scarcely deigned to notice, much less to obey, the objections and expostulations of the marquis.

"To Venice the count, exulting in the uninterrupted success of his plans, conducted Lady Ellena and the signora. It was there that immersed in pleasure, surrounded by dissipation, listening to the insidious conversation of the signora, and exposed to the graceful and insinuating arts of the count, she forgot honor, prudence, virtue, her haughtiness, her rank, every

thing but her passion for the count. At that baleful shrine were sacrificed the peace and happiness of her future life.

"Thus was accomplished the principal purpose of the count. From the credulous liberality of Lady Ellena he derived the resources of his extravagance; and while his connexion remained secret, he still hoped, on the death of the marquis, to find himself an object of his bounty. Till that event, which could not be distant, he prevailed on lady Ellena to defer their marriage, convinced that the marquis would never consent to their union, nor transmit to them any part of his immense possessions.

"Amid the splendid and voluptuous scenes in which the count was careful to engage her, days and weeks pas-

sed unheeded before she awoke from the delightful delirium, before she became sensible of the value of the character which she had so inconsiderately forfeited. Her partiality for the count was soon perceived, and the envious and the malicious were not disposed to bury their observations in silence. The ladies whom she visited, by degrees withdrew from her acquaintance. Those cavaliers who from a motive more laudable than interest had sought her favor, with mingled sentiments of indignation and contempt quitted a pursuit no longer honorable. Of all the crowd that once followed her steps, none remained but those whose desperate fortunes rendered them indifferent to the ignominy of their situation.

"To prevent Lady Ellena from indulging the reflections which this desertion would probably excite, and to

dissipate her attention by new objects, the countintroduced to her theassociates of his idle hours; men chiefly with whom he had become acquainted at the gaming table; to which, in defiance of the frequent admonitions of the marquis, who pointed out to him the fatal consequences of this propensity in his father, he was a constant visitor.

"Among the motley group, of all ages and characters, thus collected round her, the Chevalier de Sombreuil soon distinguished himself. His manners were elegant, and his conversation attractive. The penetration of Lady Ellena quickly discovered that he possessed no common mind. A concurrence in many opinions, and a general similarity of taste, soon caused her to regard him with more attention than his companions.

"In the lost and degraded state to which the ungovernable passions of Lady Ellena had reduced her, the dupe of designing villany, abandoned by those who had falsely styled themselves her friends, one alone, with an ardor worthy of that name, attempted to withdraw her from this disgraceful scene. He was a particular friend of the marquis, and venerable alike for his age and for his virtues. In terms at once calm, tender, and dignified, he pointed out the impropriety of her conduct, and exhorted her to seise the opportunity, which the marquis's ignorance of what had passed afforded, to regain the path of honor. He represented in strong and pathetic terms the despair that would overwhelm the marquis, the contempt and infamy which she would universally incur, the remorse and misery that must inevitably overtake

her future years, should she persevere in so criminal a course.

"Finding these admonitions, which his regard for the marquis had led him to offer, utterly neglected, and that instead of reforming, her behaviour became daily more reprehensible, he made one last effort to reclaim her; and concluded by declaring his intention, should this remonstrance prove as ineffectual as the former, immediately to acquaint the marquis with the whole affair.

"Ever above control, ever obstinate and perverse, the interference of this nobleman only rendered Lady Ellena more determined to persevere. Insensible to the benevolent motives which dictated his words, they excited in her mind the deepest animosity; and this emotion was exasperated by the appre-

hension of his executing the threat which, with what she thought an unpardonable insolence, he had dared to denounce. Reflection magnified her fears; and the concealment which she thought it prudent to maintain on this subject towards the count, augmented her uneasiness and resentment.

"The alarming uncertainty in which this nobleman's threat had placed her, was removed by his sudden and violent death. His unexpected absence alarmed his family; and after a diligent search, his body, pierced with many wounds, was found in an obscure canal: but notwithstanding the great exertions of the police, the perpetrators of this atrocious deed escaped detection.

" This catastrophe produced a singular effect on Lady Ellena, and wrought

that change which friendly remonstrance and the reiterated requests of the marquis for her return had in vain attempted. She suddenly quitted Venice, and accompanied by the signora, the count, and the Chevalier de Sombreuil, returned to the villa of her father, who was still confined there by indisposition.

"Though surprised and offended by her absence, which had been extended to months, he had not the most remote suspicion of the truth; and after gently upbraiding his daughter for having so long deprived him of her society, he received both her and the count with his usual affection. The Chevalier de Sombreuil, introduced as the friend of the count, experienced a most flattering welcome, and his interesting manners and conversation rendered him highly agreeable to the marquis.

"During four years, which these oc-

currences occupied, I had remained in the convent. Wearied with the tedious monotony which surrounded me, I anticipated, with youthful delight, the moment of emancipation. I had just completed my seventeenth year, when I was summoned one morning to attend Lady Ellena in the convent parlour. Elated with hope, not doubting that she came to recall me to the world which I was so anxious to revisit, I hastened to join her. But one instant, the first glance, annihilated my brilliant visions of coming happiness.

"Her countenance was severe, her manners cold and haughty. Without consulting my inclinations, without any prelude to prepare me for so unexpected a proposal, she at once informed me of her intention that I should embrace a religious life, and commence my noviciate in the following month.

of the affecting earnestness with which my mother had bequeathed to me the care of her family.

"Lady Ellena heard me without interruption; but her determination was not to be shaken. She censured my presumption in disputing her wishes, and counseling me to cultivate a more becoming disposition, intimated that her design, though new to me, was not of recent adoption; as a convent was the only proper asylum for a person of my rank, destitute of fortune.

"An English lady had lately joined our community; and a similarity of misfortunes had made us intimate. From her I learned that the civil dissensions were terminated; and that both parties, uniting in regret for my father's fate, had restored his title aud possessions to his brother, who, during our calamity,

was absent abroad in a high military station. This intelligence rendered one more averse to renounce my country; and by the advice and assistance of this lady, I transmitted a letter to the marquis.

"Of the month allowed only two days remained, when the arrival of a courier saved me from despair. The marquis had granted my request, and I was conducted to his villa.

"It was evening when I arrived. Lady Ellena, surrounded by a group of flatterers, was standing in the ball-room. She scarcely deigned to notice my respectful salutation as I hurried by her towards the marquis, who was seated at some distance. He received me with the affection of a parent, and my heart felt his kindness too sensibly for expression.

" Lady Ellena's negligent reception rendered me the object of general attention; and after having lived so long in retirement, this circumstance oppressed and confused me. The marquis, perceiving my distress, presented my hand to Count Cajetan, and requested him to lead me to the dance which was just beginning; observing that he had selected the count to introduce me to the amusements of the evening, as we were already acquainted.

" Unhappily this incident contributed to increase the dislike which Lady Ellena had expressed towards me on my entrance. At the conclusion of the dance, she advanced, and in an imperious tone commanded me to retire; and taking the hand of the count, they walked towards another part of the room, while I, stifling the indignation which this unprovoked severity excited, with drew in silence.

"I relate this occurrence, in itself trivial, merely as it displays the unfriendly conduct of Lady Ellena, and the treatment which I experienced subsequent to my return from the convent; a circumstance which, notwithstanding her great influence over the marquis, she had been unable to prevent.

"The marquis perceived that my situation was unpleasant, though he knew not to how great extent; and this conviction rendered him more anxious to hasten my return to England. At my desire he had written to my uncle; and I resolved, during the tedious interval while I awaited his answer, to endure the haughtiness of Lady Ellena with submission and equanimity.

"The marquis's health was in a very precarious state, and frequently confined him to his apartment.

In his company I passed the greatest part of my time, endeavouring by my attentions to relieve his sufferings, and withdraw his thoughts from the painful emotions which Lady Ellena's undutiful neglect excited. These attempts, not wholly unsuccessful, enabled me in some degree to testify the gratitude which his unvaried kindness had impressed on me.

" Possessed of every external requisite to happiness, Lady Ellena was miserable; and her misery was aggravated by the conviction that her own imprudence had produced it. Since her return from Venice her vivacity had only gleamed at intervals. Like an April sun, it's brilliant beams burst with transitory splendor between the surrounding clouds.

" A leading topic of conversation at

this time was the mysterious murder which had so recently happened at Venice; and as Lady Ellena's residence there at the time was supposed to have given her a knowlege of the particulars, she was often applied to for information.

"On these occasions, her countenance and manner were singular, and betrayed an agitation which she in vain attempted to conceal. Her answers were confused, and she either changed the subject, or, when that was not possible, abruptly quitted the apartment.

"I long observed these singularities before an accident revealed to me their origin. Signora Bruna, who latterly slept in an apartment adjoining to Lady Ellena's, was on a visit to a sick relation, and during her absence I occupied this room. One night I was wa-

ked by some person seising my hand. On a table opposite to the foot of my bed a lamp was burning, and on one side stood a person wrapped in a long white garment which partly concealed the countenance: that it was pale and haggard, the faint rays of the lamp, partially shining on it, enabled me to discern. I gazed in speechless astonishment and terror.

"'De Sombreuil, de Sombreuil," said my unknown visitor, in a voice which I immediately knew to be that of Lady Ellena, now is the moment. He is alone. Follow him. One blow, and all is safe.' Here she paused, and quitting my side, walked slowly about the apartment, sometimes stopping as if to listen. At length she advanced towards the door. Then suddenly springing back, she started to the other end of the room, and uttering a faint scream, sunk into a chair.

" After a silence of considerable length, she raised her head and looked around, while with a shudder she said, ' It is cold; how very cold! You are come at last. Give me your hand: feel how I tremble. There is blood on it, and here is blood. O, I am surrounded by blood;' and rising, she moved towards me, exclaiming, ' Hide me, de Sombreuil; hide me from these horrors.'

" Then stepping with a frantic laugh, she added, " Now he can no longer threaten; in security I may pursue my pleasures. Did no one speak? Are you sure no one saw you? What a dreadful darkness! No moon, not one star: Dark, dark; all is dark! There; those mysterious sounds again! They strike upon my heart. Whither shall I flee?" Rapidly uttering these words, she seised the lamp and quitted the apartment.

During this scene I neither moved nor spoke. My faculties, fixed with

horror, seemed spell-bound. Shocked and amazed by the discovery of her guilt, I scarcely believed it real; but reflection furnished too many corroborating circumstances to admit of long doubt. Regard for the marquis made me confine to my own bosom this transaction, of which Lady Ellena was unconscious, the whole having passed in her sleep. I afterwards learned from the signora that these nocturnal wanderings were not unusual. Her imagination, strongly impressed with the horrors of that fatal night, often, while her senses were lost in sleep, made her start from her couch to re-act that dismal tragedy. After this time the society, even the presence, of Lady Ellena became insupportable, and I almost wholly secluded myself in my own or the marquis's apartment.

" It was about this period that the Chevalier de Sombreuil returned from

an excursion to Rome, accompanied by your brother; who allured by the fascinating beauty of Lady Ellena, beholding only the captivating exterior which veiled her character, after a very short acquaintance made her a tender of his hand. This, like all former offers, she declined without hesitation.

" Exasperated by so unexpected a refusal, Lord Richard armed, prepared to depart, and it was with no little difficulty that the count and chevalier, to whom in the first transports of resentment he revealed his disappointment, could prevail on him to remain while they tried the effect of their friendly interference with Lady Ellena.

" Of their motives and arguments on this occasion I am ignorant, but after a conference of considerable length, Lady Ellena was induced to alter her

determination. The consent of the marquis was easily obtained, Lord Richard's proposal affording him the highest satisfaction: and shortly after, the marriage was celebrated with great pomp.

"It was not long before, weary of the retirement which the marquis's declining health rendered necessary, Lady Ellena, forgetting the sacred duties of a daughter, quitted her venerable parent; and accompanied by her husband and the count, hastened to the capital, and amid it's various amusements sought to banish recollection. The Chevalier de Sombreuil had a little before left them with the design of going to England, where some important affairs suddenly required his presence.

"Beside the marquis, Signora Bruna

remained at the villa, confined by a fatal but lingering disorder. To acute bodily sufferings in her were joined the still more intolerable pangs inflicted by remorse. Enfeebled by disease; disappointed in the hopes which had seduced her from integrity; neglected by Lady Ellena and the count, who were glad to be freed from the society of one no longer useful, and whose presence only revived unpleasant recollections; she yielded with unresisted violence to resentment and despair. Listening only to the dictates of these turbulent passions, she took the resolution of disclosing to the marquis the long and artful deceptions practised on him by the count and Lady Ellena.

"For some time all my endeavours to alter this determination were fruitless. At length my entreaties, aided by the near approach of death, dispos-

ed her to adopt milder sentiments. To me alone were revealed the enormities which had disgraced her unhappy and misguided pupil; crimes which with tears, and unfeigned though too late repentance, the signora confessed to have been, if not suggested, at least encouraged by her silence and negligence.

" Thus continually accusing herself, amid all the horrors of a guilty conscience, Signora Bruna expired. Had she possessed less vanity, or more fortitude under adversity, her other qualities would have rendered her a respectable if not a worthy character.

" After a few months the marquis's health, deeply affected by the unkind neglect of his daughter, rapidly declined. No remonstrances, no entreaties had been able to withdraw her from the dissipation in which her days were

consumed; till the count, urged by interested motives, unwillingly sought the couch of his dying patron. His example recalled her to some sense of propriety; and two days before the decease of the marquis she returned to the villa.

"The apathy which marked her conduct, the want of tenderness and sensibility apparent in all her words and actions, were ill calculated to sooth the last hours of mortality. A scene so sad and humiliating excited new and painful emotions in her bosom. Unable to endure herself, shocked and dismayed, she quitted the apartment, expressing her regret that she had ever been induced to witness so distressing a spectacle.

"The marquis, who still retained his senses, keenly felt her desertion. Taking my hand, he exclaimed, 'Daugh-

ter of my affection, you will not forsake me!' These were his last words. To his latest moment he remained with his eyes fixed on me. He was my only friend, and with unfeigned sorrow I mourned his death.

" Lady Ellena appeared insensible to the irreparable loss she had sustained. Her transient grief was soon succeeded by joy, when she contemplated the immense possessions bequeathed to her.

" In less than a fortnight after the decease of the marquis, a packet arrived from my uncle containing two letters. That addressed to the marquis I delivered to Lady Ellena. In his letter to me my uncle, expressed the pleasure which my return would afford him, and in the most affectionate terms desired me not to delay leaving Italy. He regretted that military duties,

which for a short time required his presence in Ireland, rendered it impossible for him to accompany me during my journey, as he had designed.

"You will easily imagine my happiness on receiving this kind invitation; but however impatient to depart, I thought it becoming to wait for Lady Ellena to open the subject. In this expectation several days elapsed; when finding her still persevere in a silence which I had reason to think not undesigned, I ventured to request her permission to commence my journey.

"After a short hesitation, and with some appearance of confusion, she replied that she had other intentions with respect to me; the plan which she had before mentioned had been suspended not relinquished; she was shortly going to visit England herself; and while

there she should probably see my uncle, and would then explain to him the reasons of her conduct. She concluded by saying that the next morning was appointed for me to return to the convent.

"Supplications and remonstrances were alike vain; she would listen to no argument; but after censuring the application to my uncle which had been made without her knowlege, and repeating her determination that I should take the veil, she rose and quitted the apartment, regardless of the affliction into which her discourse had plunged me.

"My situation appeared so hopeless, that desperate measures alone could extricate me. Several projects occurred, which the impossibility of executing them compelled me to reject. No

resource seemed left, and I was resigning myself to despair, when I observed from the window, near which I remained standing, the young marquis, your brother, pass down one of the paths of the garden. It instantly occurred to me that his interposition might yet preserve me from the fate which I dreaded; and actuated by this idea I hastened to him, and falling on my knees besought him to take pity on me, and to intercede with Lady Ellena in my behalf.

"My words and extreme distress greatly surprized the marquis. For a moment he gazed on me in silence; then raising me, he requested me to explain the cause of my uneasiness, and in what manner he could be of service. Encouraged by his kindness and the interest which he expressed, I briefly related the circumstances, and entreated him to use his influence with Lady El-

lena to obtain her permission for my return to England.

"He listened with attention to my narrative, and at it's conclusion in the most obliging terms assured me of his friendship, and desired me to rely with confidence on the success of his endeavours to serve me. The next morning Lady Ellena, without noticing my application to the marquis, informed me that she no longer objected to my accompanying her to England; provided that I promised neither to write to, nor attempt to see, my uncle without her knowlege. To this condition I readily assented, and in a few days we quitted Italy.

"It was during this journey, while in anticipation I was enjoying the protection of my uncle and the termination of my misfortunes, that a new perscu-

tion arose. Impressed with gratitude for the important service which the marquis had rendered me, I endeavoured to testify it by attentions; for ignorant of the passion with which I had unhappily inspired him, I attributed his exertions in my favor to generosity and friendship. This pleasing delusion was short. The marquis seised every opportunity of declaring his sentiments, and notwithstanding the indignation which I expressed, continually insulted me by his insolent and criminal proposals.

"To Lady Ellena I dared not appeal. I even trembled, lest any incident should excite her suspicion, aware that from her violent and implacable dispotion I had every thing to fear. The marquis, well acquainted with this circumstance, placed on it his chief reliance, imagining that terror would compel me to accept his protection.

"The hope that on my reaching England I should be emancipated from the power of Lady Ellena, alone enabled me to support the irksomeness of my situation; but my hopes were never realized. The prohibition of Lady Ellena, of which she failed not to remind me, perverted all intercourse with my uncle, who remained ignorant of my arrival; when I requested her permission to write to him, she always found some reason for delay. Her unkind policy likewise debarred me from the pleasure of your society, and obliged me to assume towards you a coldness and reserve foreign to my feelings.

"Even during my residence at Fitzbaynham castle I was frequently exposed to the persecutions of the marquis, whom neither entreaties nor resentment could induce to desist. On the morning when you unexpectedly entered the temple in Fitzbaynham garden, he was

urging me to place myself under his protection. He assumed one that it was never intended to restore me to my family, and besought me by flight to avoid the rigorous and unjust designs to which I was exposed. Shocked and distressed by this intelligence, I could no longer refrain from tears. I had nearly fainted, when your entrance suddenly recalled me to be conscious of the impropriety of my situation, and of the degrading conjectures which it must naturally excite in your mind.

"Overpowered by shame and vexation I was unable to give any explanation, or even to supplicate your pity. Rushing from the temple, I secluded myself in my apartment, oppressed by the most afflicting emotions. I was sensible that on me would be wreaked the vengeance of Lady Ellena on this discovery, and I reflected that my inno-

cence would be ineffectually opposed to her power. To your silence on this subject I am indebted for my safety: Our almost immediate removal allowed me no opportunity for expressing the gratitude your forbearance had excited, except the few words which I was able, unperceived by Lady Ellena, to address to you just before our departure.

"During the short time which intervened before we again so unexpectedly met at the banquet in Etonbury castle, I accidentally learned part of the designs which the count and Lady Ellena meditated against you. This new scene of treachery not only confirmed the resolution I had before adopted, of endeavouring to escape from their power, but also made me anxious to snatch you from the miserable lot to which they had consigned you. Having, with

the few jewels I possessed, purchased the assistance of Maurice, I awaited with anxiety the hour of commencing our perilous undertaking. With what followed you are acquainted.

" After a short pause, Blanche continued, turning towards Jacqueline, ' I regret that in this recital, in order to vindicate my own character, I have been obliged to reveal the errors of persons so intimately connected with your family. The strict truth which has guided me throughout, is the only apology I can offer; and I entreat your pardon for the freedom and warmth which in some passages I have found it impossible wholly to suppress."

Taking the hand of Blanche, Jacqueline in an affectionate tone expressed the regard and compassion which the relation of her unmerited sufferings had excited, and she requested Blanche

not to let the injuries she had sustained from one branch of her family exclude her from a friendship which she was so desirous of securing.

Blanche had begun a suitable reply, when she suddenly perceived a man issue from a cluster of trees which surrounded the alcove. Jacqueline likewise observed the person as he proceeded down the path. Seen indistinctly in the dusky twilight, his sable garment floating in the breeze, Jacqueline fancied that she recognised the unknown who had visited the oratory on the preceding night. She also recollected, with an emotion nearly allied to terror, the mysterious being who, Agnes had affirmed, was at uncertain intervals seen wandering about the grounds.

The increasing darkness diffused a gloomy obscurity, which, joined to the

late hour and profound stillness, impressed the imagination with solemnity and awe. Jacqueline and Blanche remained gazing on the object of their alarm, as he slowly receded, till the shade of an adjoining grove concealed him from their view. Each from a mutual regard forbore to express the apprehensions which this intrusion had excited. That it was not usual seemed probable; and Blanche trembled as she reflected that this person was perhaps an agent of the marchioness; while Jacqueline, who considered this incident as connected with the mystery which enveloped the baron, felt both curiosity and horror. Was this a restless spirit, condemned to wander over the spot which had witnessed it's crimes; or did it seek atonement for it's wrongs? Jacqueline dreaded, when she remembered the self accusa-

tion of her father, that these wrongs might have been perpetrated by him.

The voice of Blanche recalled her from these reflections; and hastily returning to the château, they reached it without experiencing any new cause of alarm.

CHAPTER XVII.

The pale assistants on each other star'd,
With gasping mouths for issuing words prepar'd.
The still-born sounds upon the palate hung,
And died imperfect on the faltering tongue.
With horror shuddering on a heap they run.

DRYDEN.

JACQUELINE immediately repaired to the apartment of her father. He was better, and in compliance with his desire she reluctantly left him for the night to the care of Arthur and his other attendants. Feeling little inclination to rest, and expecting a repetition of the singular scene of the preceding night, she seated herself near the screen which separated her chamber

from the oratory, and awaited the appearance of their nocturnal visitor.

Here she had full opportunity to reflect on the narrative of Blanche. The depravity of the marchioness and count filled her with abhorrence, and it was with the deepest indignation and concern that she considered the hasty and imprudent marriage of the marquis. Towards Blanche she felt the highest gratitude for having rescued her from the power of persons whose conduct was guided by no law but their turbulent passions. The scenes in which she had been lately engaged, and the solitude of her present situation, imparted a sombre character to her ideas, and she reflected with renewed pain on the mystery which surrounded her father, that inexhaustible source of conjecture and anxiety.

The night passed without any interruption; and towards morning Jacqueline for some hours enjoyed a tranquil slumber.

On entering the baron's apartment the next day, she was pleasingly surprised to find him risen. He was seated before a table covered with papers, which he appeared to be arranging. Unwilling to interrupt him, Jacqueline would have retired; but the baron desired her to remain; and after some preliminary discourse, requested her to explain the cause of her absence from Fitzbaynham castle. Apprehensive of the effect which this communication might have on the baron, she with some difficulty obtained his permission to defer it till his health was more confirmed.

In the afternoon, leaving the baron,

who was still engaged in perusing the writings, Jacqueline wandered into the grounds. Pursuing a shady path she reached the canal, which on this side formed the boundary of the extensive domains, and separated them from the adjoining forest. Continuing herway along it's margin, for some distance, she came to a shrubbery, or what from it's extent and neglected state might more properly be called a wilderness. The wild and uncultivated appearance of this place formed a striking contrast with the rest of the gardens, and Jacqueline with some difficulty proceeded between the branches and underwood which almost obstructed her steps.

In the centre of this thicket stood the banqueting house, of which Agnes had spoken with such superstitious terror; and Jacqueline having at length succeeded in penetrating to this recess,

found herself with no small degree of surprize before the entrance of this magnificent building. In the front was a lofty colonnade, which communicated with the garden by a flight of twelve marble steps. Antient grandeur, contending with the ravages of time and neglect, gave to this structure an interest, which, heightened by the surrounding desolation and unbroken silence, inspird in the beholder an emotion melancholy and even sublime.

Around the pillars, of the Corinthian order, flowers and aromatic shrubs had formerly twined. Amid the withered stalks which still encircled them, a few half-opened buds appeared; pensively drooping, and almost concealed by their decayed companions, they seemed to shrink from the ruin which encompassed them.

After a short pause, Jacqueline ventured to ascend the steps. On reaching the colonnade, she perceived that one of the folding doors was partly open. At first this circumstance astonished her, till recollecting the distant period at which this place had been deserted, she conjectured that the fastening had yielded to time. Emboldened by this supposition, and urged by curiosity, she approached the entrance and listened. A profound stillness reigned within: The door against which her hand pressed, opened wider, and she entered.

The interior of this building corresponded with it's external appearance. It was elliptical, and of extensive demensions. Most of the lattices being closed, and many of the curtains drawn, every object viewed by this dusky light

assumed an air of gloomy grandeur. The windows on each side formed recesses, in which were placed sophas covered with light blue silk and trimmed with silver like the curtains.

In the centre was a fountain formerly supplied from the canal, which on one side washed the walks. The water had flowed from a vase, supported by a figure resembling Hebe. Above rose the dome, decorated by a painting representing a banquet of the gods. The pavement, composed of marble, was inlaid in beautiful mosaic. In the piers between the windows, on pedestals of exquisite workmanship, were placed alternately, branches for supporting lights, and vases, formed from classic models, to contain the choicest perfumes.

Jacqueline advanced towards the middle, gazing around her on the beau-

tiful remains of former splendor; till at the upper end of the apartment she beheld an object which fixed her whole attention, and absorbed every other emotion in wonder and astonishment. Between two pillars which decorated this part of the room, was placed a black marble shrine. On it rested an alabaster urn, over which an angel with expanded wings appeared to hover. On the urn was inscribed in black characters, Sacred to Eloise."

Words can but ill describe the feelings of Jacqueline at sight of this tomb; so various, rapid, and complicated, it were difficult to say which predominated. Why could this place, so inappropriate, have been chosen for a sepulchre? Was it the remembrance of some fatal deed, perpetrated in this spot, of which this sad spectacle was the memorial, that had excited the horror so visible in Ag-

nes while speaking of this building? These and many similar questions Jacqueline was unable to resolve.

The inscription only increased her perplexity. Eloise was then no more. But an impenetrable mystery seemed to rest upon her fate. Why had the existence of Eloise been always concealed from her? That her death had been violent, Jacqueline conjectured from the speech of the stranger in the oratory. She trembled at the thoughts which this supposition awakened. "My father, O my father!" burst from her lips, as she reflected that the horrid images which tortured her fancy had perhaps been realised.

The reverie into which this spectacle had plunged Jacqueline, was interrupted by the approach of some persons. She started as she heard

them ascending the steps. To quit the building unperceived was impossible; and she recollected with alarm her distance from the château, the solitude of her situation, the long desertion of this spot, and the terrific manner in which Agnes had spoken of it. The objects before her, the melancholy reflection in which she had been engaged, the obscurity of the building heightened by the approach of evening, operated strongly on her imagination, and inspired her with an emotion of superstitious fear which she had never before experienced. Hastily concealing herself in the recess behind one of the drawn curtains, and sinking on the sopha, she awaited in the utmost agitation the appearance of these unwelcome intruders.

Two persons entered, and advanced in silence towards the tomb. An aper-

ture in the curtain, which in her hurry Jacqueline had omitted to close, afforded her opportunity of observing their motions; but the distance prevented her from hearing the whole of their conversation.

Both were wrapped in long black garments; and as they passed before her, Jacqueline perceived that the countenance of one was wholly concealed by his dress which in form resembled that worn by the brother of the order of the Camaldoli, or the tortures of the inquisition. His eyes alone were visible. Dark, piercing, and severe, as he rolled them around; but when they glanced on his companion, their expression was truly diabolical.

The other stranger followed him in a pensive manner. His robe was thrown back, leaving his head and face un-

covered. His eyes were bent to the ground, his countenance! pale and dejected, and his whole appearance indicated despair. What was the emotion of Jacqueline, when in this altered and emaciated figure she recognised Sir Almeric? She could not be mistaken; his features were too deeply impressed on her imagination to be forgotten Amazement, love, pity, rushed at once on her mind. She neither moved nor spoke, but continued regarding him in silent astonishment.

On reaching the upper end of the room, his conductor, turning to Sir Almeric, said, "Behold your mother's tomb!"

A silence of some minutes ensued. Sir Almeric dropped on his knees, his head rested on the black marble which inclosed her remains. At length he

raised his head. "Spirit of my unknown parent, accept the filial homage of my heart!" he exclaimed: then rising, and addressing his companion, who had remained standing with his arms folded and his head inclined forward, as if in deep thought, he said, "By the memory of my parents, and the friendship which you profess for their unhappy descendant, I conjure you to unfold the mystery which obscures their fate. That they were unhappy is all I yet know.

"Swear," replied the stranger, "swear in presence of the sacred ashes of her who gave you being, to revenge their wrongs."

"I have already sworn. Do you doubt my honor? I am a knight."

"So was your father. Yet he was

basely murdered: and his murderer still lives. To you his mangled shade calls for vengeance."

"Nor shall it call in vain," exclaimed Sir Almeric with energy: "His and my mother's wrongs are mine. I entreat you no longer to conceal the misfortunes of my family."

"First render yourself worthy of my confidence. Purchase with the blood of your parents' destroyer the knowlege which you are so anxious to obtain. This night your curiosity may be gratified: chance has placed your enemy within your power; the lapse of many years has lulled him into a fatal security; he sleeps unsuspicious, nor dreams that the hour of vengeance is so near. This night I will conduct you to his couch, and give him an easy victim to your dagger."

The stranger ceased, but Sir Almeric did not reply. Surprise and resentment held him mute; till suddenly springing forward, he seised the unknown by the arm, at the same time exclaiming, "Who are you? Is this your boasted friendship?"

The stranger remained unmoved, did not attempt to disengage himself from the grasp of Sir Almeric, while in a stern tone he said, "Begone, unworthy of the heroic race from which you spring. I will no longer seek to wake your feeble soul insensible to duty and to glory. From this hour the task of vengeance is mine. What filial affection shrinks from accomplishing, friendship shall achieve. Eloise, your sufferings shall not be unrevenged. Leave me," he continued, turning towards Sir Almeric, who provoked by

this speech interrupted him by saying, "Never will I leave you till you remove the evil which conceals my origin. Who were my parents? Why are you silent? Answer. I warn you not to trifle longer with me."

Some moments elapsed, and the stranger remained obstinately silent. Sir Almeric's temper was ardent; his anger rose at this contumelious treatment. "Away," he cried; at the same time placing his hand on the head of the unknown, and attempting to withdraw the covering which concealed his face, "Away with this disguise."

"Forbear," said the unknown, "nor provoke my resentment farther. Hear me. A stranger to you, from my countenance you can gain no informa-

tion, and the instant that you behold it I am bound in an eternal silence on all that relates to you."

"Speak then at once," exclaimed Sir Almeric; "Speak." With an ineffectual effort the unknown endeavoured to release himself from the grasp of Sir Almeric.

"Force," said he, "may compel my body, but has no power over my mind. Proceed as you have begun; resign yourself to the guidance of unrestrained passions. On me wreak the fury which you refuse to show to those who deserve it. I shall no longer resist: on me let it fall. Eloise, in your cause I am a willing victim. But remember; with me will perish the secret of your birth. Of all who knew it, I alone survive."

"Is it friendship for my parents that leads you thus to sport with the feelings of their son? Let this mockery cease. Once more I ask an explanation of the mystery which involves me?"

"You recollect," replied the unknown, "the oath which you have solemnly taken, and the act of justice which it bound you to perform. Would you hesitate should it require you to plunge a dagger into the bosom of your dearest friend?" He paused for an instant, and then said, "It does require it. Nature and duty exact of you this exertion. Yes," continued the unknown, "that man whom you most honor and esteem, for whose welfare you are interested, and whose happiness you have cherished as your own, is the murderer of your

father, the destroyer of your mother. I am the only witness of his guilt. During twenty years the admiration and applause of the world have followed his steps. My eye too has followed him. In his haggard countenance once I beheld with exultation the workings of remorse. Eloise, in his moments of highest festivity, you were not forgotten."

Before the conclusion of this speech Sir Almeric relinquished from his hold the garment of the unknown, and remained gazing on him, while his countenance expressed surprise not unmingled with doubt. "Think not to deceive me," said he: "Of whom do you speak?" The unknown shrunk not from his scrutinising look; their eyes met. Each endeavoured in these intervals to discover what was passing in the other's mind. Those of

the unknown did not display the mild dignity and regret of a beneficent character compelled unwillingly to inflict punishment on the guilty, but hatred and defiance.

"I did not come hither to be questioned," rejoined the unknown in a haughty manner. "Is it possible that the sight of the last memorial of your unhappy mother excites no wish to to punish her destroyer? Do you waste in idle dispute the opportunity that may never return?"

Sir Almeric again required the unknown to be more explicit, and at length he seemed to have complied. For some time he and Sir Almeric remained in earnest discourse, but in so low a tone that only a few imperfect sentences reached Jacqueline. These words, too, unconnected to convey in-

formation, heightened her curiosity, and instead of diminishing rather augmented the fears which the stranger's discourse had excited. With some difficulty she resisted a faintness which oppressed her, at each instant she expected yet dreaded to hear the name of Sir Almeric's enemy. Horror thrilled in every nerve, and she gasped for breath; a shocking presentiment, which her reason was unable to reject, seised on her mind. Reflection increased her terrors, and confirmed her apprehension. In the unknown she recognised the nocturnal visitant to the oratory: his voice, his air and gestures were too singular to admit of doubt. His words had then excited alarm; for to her terrified imagination they seemed to point towards the baron: but of what was then mere suspicion and conjecture the present scene appeared to her conviction. In her unsullied

bosom the idea of the baron's guilt had always occasioned the most poignant suffering, and language is unable to express the emotions with which she contemplated the enormity of his crime. Her distress scarcely admitted of increase; yet when she considered that the parents of Sir Almeric were the victims of this horrible action, she was sensible of a keener anguish.

Every circumstance indeed which could augment her misery, was combined. She recollected the agitation and even horror of the baron on the first introduction of Sir Almeric at Fitzbaynham castle, the terror and temporary derangement with which he had been seised on the night of their arrival at Guienne, when he discovered that they were in the neighbourhood of the château, and in the wild exclamations which escaped him the name of Eloise

more than one pronounced. The affection and veneration with which she had always been accustomed to regard the baron, made her recoil from the belief of an atrocity which formed so decided a contrast with his character and disposition. Hope lent it's delusive charm to sooth her anguish; she considered that her alarming apprehensions rested solely on conjecture, and might be really unfounded: but a few instants dissipated the calm which this idea had imparted. The unknown raising his voice, Jacqueline was able to distinguish his words. They struck with a deadly pang upon her heart, and annihilated the last lingering gleam of peace and happiness. Her worst and most distressing fears were realised: and as the stranger pronounced her father's name, with a cold shudder her senses fled, and she fell back on the sofa.

The continued absence of Jacqueline both surprised and alarmed Blanche, who had for some time anxiously awaited her return. From one of the windows of a saloon which opened on the lawn she watched the approach of evening. The last ray of light which trembled in the west, and faintly illumined the loftiest summits of the Pyrenées, had faded into the obscurity of night, which had long shrouded the intermediate landscape, and rendered even the nearest objects indistinct.

Every moment augmented the uneasiness of Blanche, and her apprehensions for Jacqueline's safety at length induced her to dispatch several of the domestics in quest of her. As they passed along the distant paths, the glare of their torches, sometimes almost obscured by the intermediate foliage, at others streaming between an opening,

she more than once thought that the sudden and uncertain light fell on the mysterious figure whom Jacqueline and herself had observed in the garden on the preceding evening, and who seemed hastily to conceal himself in the surrounding gloom.

This circumstance, real or imaginary, raised the terror of Blanche to a most painful height: Many new and undefined fears seised her mind. Unable longer to remain inactive, she quitted the château, and regardless of danger to herself, attended by Pierre and Agnes, joined in the search.

In vain she frequently called on Jacqueline. That name, repeated in faint echoes, alone replied to her voice. It was equally in vain that she traversed the distant and most retired walks: no vestige of Jacqueline appeared. Yet

still regardless of fatigue and the united solicitations of the domestics, she continued her researches.

Proceeding down a narrow intricate path, which she had not before observed, Blanche had advanced a considerable distance before she perceived that she was alone. Astonished at this unexpected circumstance, she hastily retraced her steps; and on turning an angle, found the domestics collected in a group, their countenances expressing no small degree of terror. "O madam," exclaimed Agnes, moving slowly towards her, "heaven be praised that you are returned. I thought that we should never behold you more.

Without noticing this speech, Blanche inquired the reason of their not following her. It was necessary to repeat this question before she could ob-

tain an answer. The servants remained regarding each other, till at length in a faltering voice Pierre informed her that this path led to the banqueting house. Blanche, who was ignorant of the superstitious fears which these people entertained respecting that building, finding that they had not searched that place, proposed to examine it herself, as it was not improbable Jacqueline might be there; and on ordering them to attend her, she again moved forward.

The path terminated in a small semicircular lawn on the opposite side of which stood the banqueting house. On reaching this opening, Blanche was advancing towards the steps, when Agnes, seising her arm, conjured her not to attempt exploring the horrors of that place. The solemn earnestness with which she spoke, made Blanche pause, and gave her an opportunity

of observing the forlorn and desolate appearance of this gloomy spot, imperfectly revealed by the waving and uncertain light of the torches.

Though unacquainted with the circumstances which seemed to impress all around her with terror, Blanche was affected by the dreary and desolate aspect of the scene; and her spirits, depressed by the mysterious absence of Jacqueline, were unable, while she blushed at her weakness, wholly to resist the contagion of fear.

Relinquishing her original intention of entering the building herself, Blanche directed some of the servants, who had remained at the end of the alley, to search it. The consternation which this order threw among them, was extreme; and instead of advancing to execute it, they all, as if moved by the

same impulse, retreated several steps, while Pierre besought Blanche to retire from the place, nor further provoke the vengeance of it's dreadful inhabitants. What effect this harangue, which was faithfully echoed by Agnes, might have had on Blanche is uncertain, as he was interrupted before it's conclusion by the approach of one of the domestics, who declared himself willing, even alone, to enter the banqueting house.

This young man, who had not long been at the château, had hitherto not only resisted the contagion of those superstitious fears with which the rest of the household were infected, but had even frequently made them the objects of his ridicule. By this behaviour he had obtained the name of the fearless Simon; and it was observed that the recital of the most horrible tales had

never occasioned his complexion to vary, much less his limbs to tremble.

Blanche having signified her approbation of his offer, he seised a torch, and without hesitation advanced towards the colonnade, while Blanche remained leaning against a tree behind which Pierre and Agnes placed themselves. What was the opinion of these venerable personages respecting supernatural beings, does not appear; but their conduct indicates that they considered them actuated by the same motives which influence mankind; at least on this emergency they seemed to think it the best policy to act on this principle: and accordingly, knowing the regard usually paid to rank, they had stationed themselves near Blanche. Perhaps their expectations of safety from this situation were not very sanguine, but to them it was

a forlorn hope; for their advanced age rendered it impossible for them to escape by flight: otherwise it is not improbable that they would have preferred that method of avoiding the horrors which they anticipated.

The rest of the domestics still continued at the end of the path, their heads turned back, and their eyes fixed on the banqueting house. From their attitude they seemed to be only competitors at some race, and only waiting for the signal to start. Such indeed was their intention: for not being like Pierre and Agnes, compelled to remain, they preferred trusting to the vigor of their limbs, rather than to the mercy of the dreadful being, whom they expected every instant to burst from the building.

Simon, who had reached the colon-

nade, felt at every step a greater reluctance to proceed. He recollected all the shocking circumstances reported to have been transacted on that spot, and shuddered to find himself within the pillars of an edifice the reputed residence of unquiet spirits. He was not destitute of courage, but his vanity had tempted him to assume the appearance of more than he really possessed, and the applause which this conduct procured, served to stimulate his desire for more. The horror which had seised the rest of the domestics of the thought of entering this place, he had beheld with pleasure, as it afforded him a signal opportunity for displaying his intrepidity. Casting a look of contempt on his terrified companions, he had proceeded undismayed to accomplish this valorous enterprises.

Without apprehension he had ascend-

ed the steps; when, raising his torch as he advanced towards the folding doors, he thought that in a distant part of the colonnade he distinguished some person gliding behind a pillar. The appearance was too momentary to allow of certainty; it might be only the shadow of one of the pillars, at least he was willing to believe that it was nothing more: but whatever it was, this circumstance considerably damped his spirits; his assumed courage began to ebb, and he heartily repented of the temerity which had led him to undertake the adventure.

The consideration, however, that his honor required him to persevere, and that to recede now would, degrade him from a hero into a miserable object of pity or contempt, once more inflamed his vanity, and prepared him to encounter every danger and horror.

Anxious, therefore, lest his truant courage should again desert him, he hastened forward to the doors. They were closed. At this sight he experienced a fresh accession of valor. Should they indeed be fastened, he could without further danger terminate with glory this perilous affair.

Animated by hope, and resolved to finish with eclât, he pushed against them with violence; when, to his utter disappointment and vexation, they both flew open. Rage for a moment supplied the place of the more heroic passions, which with most provoking sickness had again deserted him, as the flashes of his torch enabled him to perceive indistinctly the magnitude and obscurity of the apartment which the unwelcome opening of the doors had disclosed. For a moment he remained

irresolute: then collecting the small remains of courage and ambition, he rushed forward with desperate boldness.

A profound silence reigned among the domestics, as with intent earnestness they gazed on the entrance through which Simon had passed. He was no longer visible; for the windows were all shut, and the light, at first strongly reflected on the doorway, became fainter and fainter. Several minutes elapsed, and some of the least timid had ventured to advance a few steps; when the voice of Simon, loudly calling for assistance, was heard, and at the same instant he rushed wildly into the colonnade. His pace could not be called either walking or running, but bore a nearer resemblance to flying; for alone bound he descended the whole flight of steps; and he continued his career across the lawn, and down the path,

with a speed which excess of terror only could confer.

At his first outcry the terrified domestics had fled in all directions. Trusting to their speed for safety, they hurled the torches from them as useless incumbrances, and employed their empty hands in urging forwards those before them. Listening only to the dictates of fear, and regardless whither they fled, some became entangled in the adjoining thicket; others, in their hurry to escape, overthrew each other, and by their cries and frantic gestures increased the general panic.

During this scene of confusion Blanche, with Pierre and Agnes, had retained her station. Her extreme alarm had at first rendered her unable to move; but this emotion soon gave place to astonishment, at perceiving

no cause for the precipitate retreat of Simon. The clamor of the fugitives was soon almost lost in distance; and in the building every thing remained perfectly still.

While Blanche was hesitating whether to persecute the search herself, an exclamation of Agnes made her look towards the edifice. She beheld some person issue from it, who, descending the steps, after a short pause advanced towards the spot where she stood.

The trembling limbs of Pierre and Agnes could no longer support them, but falling on their knees, they vehemently implored the protection of their patron saint. Supposing their last hour arrived, and anxious for the preservation of their immortal part, they both at once, in a tone between a murmur and a scream, which bore so little

resemblance to a human voice as to be nearly unintelligible, commenced a confession of their sins.

This harmonious concert was at it's height, when Blanche, by the light of the torches, some of which unextinguished by their fall, were still burning on the ground, in the object of her terror recognised Jacqueline, and with inexpressible joy sprung forwards to meet her.

The two fear-struck penitents on perceiving their mistake, assisted each other to rise; both congratulating themselves that in their unfinished confessions they had reserved the heaviest offences for the close of the catalogue.

The pleasure of Blanche at this unexpected meeting was quickly succeeded by anxiety on observing the languor

and paleness which appeared in the countenance of Jacqueline, who resting on the arm of Blanche feebly requested to be conducted to her apartment. Leaning on Blanche and Agnes, and preceded by Pierre carrying a torch, Jacqueline at length reached the château, and was immediately conveyed to her chamber.

When Pierre entered the wing appropriated to the domesties, he distinguished the voice of Simon, who having been restored to the use of his faculties and some degree of self composure by a plentiful libation of strong liquors, was engaged in narrating to his credulous and wondering auditors the dreadful scene which he had witnessed.

The alarm of Simon had in fact proceeded from his own imagination alone, deeply impressed with terror at the sup-

posed danger of his situation. As he proceeded up the banqueting house, his attention had been particularly and almost exclusively employed in endeavouring to ascertain whether any horrid spectre lurked in the distant obscurity; for the light of the torch was insufficient to reveal a great part of the immense apartment.

In this manner he had reached the edge of the fountain, ignorant of it's existence. His amazement and dismay can be easily conceived, when he found himself on the brink of what to his terrified fancy appeared a fathomless abyss, which he believed had suddenly opened to swallow him up. So totally was he overcome by horror, that he stood gasping and unable to move; when his eyes glancing on the figure of Hebe in the centre, which to his distracted sight seemed moving towards him, he

immediately conjectured it to be the dreadful inhabitant of this abode of terrors, about to pursue him for his temerity. This horrible idea restored the use of his limbs; and calling wildly for assistance, he fled with the utmost precipitation.

It was the outcry of Simon, and the light which he carried, suddenly flashing on Jacqueline's countenance through the opening in the curtain which recalled her from the state of insensibility into which she had been thrown by the speech of the unknown. Some minutes elapsed before her senses were sufficiently restored to inform her where she was; but as her memory revived, she recollected with feelings of the deepest anguish, the recent scene. The darkness in which the upper part of the room was involved, prevented her discerning whether Sir Almeric and

the unknown were still there. That they should yet remain seemed improbable; and anxious to avoid meeting them, she arose, and, guided by the light of the torches admitted through the open door, quitted the building with as much speed as her weakness would permit.

END OF VOL. II.

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